OLIVER LA FARGE *came to his writing by way of archaeology. He had begun to publish his short stories while an undergraduate at Harvard, but it was on his expeditions to Arizona, Mexico, and Guatemala that his sympathy for the native Indian found depth and substance. His first novel,* Laughing Boy, *was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1929 and marked him at once as an artist and an authority in his field. During the war, he served in the Air Transport Command, and his history of that resourceful outfit is one of the best of the war books.*

OLD CENTURY'S RIVER

by OLIVER LA FARGE

ALMOST as soon as he found those two miraculous bottles of whiskey he knew that they meant the end, and were to be the means of it. He did not state this explicitly to himself, but felt it below the level of worded thoughts or of admission, as a wild animal knows that its end is coming, as an old jungle hand, by the time he had reached his age, should have learned to know.

He saw the little suitcase that contained them by pure accident, because one of his awkward, improvised crutches slipped as he was turning away, after he had cut his fourth heart of palm. Four hearts of palm weren't much of a supply, but that was all he had strength for now. It was better to go short, and be sure of making it back to his shelter and his mosquito net before dark. He turned slowly, one crutch slipped, he caught himself, and it was then that he saw the edge of the valise, under a low-growing *ramón* palm. His faded blue eyes studied it for several seconds while he remembered that Tolling had looked for it, and had said that, among other things, he had two bottles of good whiskey in it.

He lowered himself to the ground slowly, with elaborate care not to jar his bad leg. The slightest jolt, twist, or even just wrong position meant a white swirl of pain which was not quick in going away. Presently he was on the ground, his legs out in front of him, and had pulled the little suitcase into the open.

He felt the case gently with the palm of his hand, studying it. It was about eighteen inches long and a foot wide. It had been badly scratched, probably bounced off a couple of trees when it was thrown from the plane, and one end was slightly charred. Three weeks lying on the damp ground had done it no good. Still, you could recognize its quality, the quality of the leather, very unlike the soft surface of native Mexican tanning. The brass locks were neat and solid. The initials under the handle were clear, "J.H.T." Tolling's case all right, and because he had not yet given up his fight, he could think that it was too bad that by now Tolling and McDaniels, two young and healthy men, might well be dead, and to consider with a bit of triumph and a bit of laughter that he, old, injured, his system charged with God only knew how many tropical infections, was still alive and still fighting.

An Indian would have given up by now. An Indian's reason would have told him that it was all over days ago, and very reasonably he would have given up and avoided a lot of discomfort by deliberately dying, the way Indians know how to do. A white man goes beyond reason, not with hope so much as with determination, and so a lot of times he wins out when he ought not to. Thus the first thing he got out of finding the valise was a lift, not at that moment applying to his situation the meaning of the thing he had just admitted to himself, his belief that Tolling and McDaniels had failed to

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make it. He thought of their probable demise only as a contrast to his own survival, with the triumph that the aged, the sick, the disreputable feel over the downfall of the young, the strong, the correct.

He remembered the ridiculousness of being hired by those two young fellows to guide them in the air. He remembered their tale of gold cached in an ancient mound, and the map and the old letter they had to prove it. He knew better, but they offered him nice work, good pay, and a cut in everything they found, to fly around and identify places from the air, later to run their camp and supply train. In honesty he'd warned them that they were starting too late, with the rains coming on; but they wanted to make a scout now, and come back the next season. That was all right with him. Anyway, he'd long wanted to know what it was like to fly.

He sure as hell found out. Sick and frightened, right from the start. And then good and lost — everything looked so different from the air. All he could do was feel awful and hang onto himself, and hang onto the gleam of the river, when he could find it.

After the crash, Tolling had delayed awhile, looking for the valise, before he and McDaniels started out. He had hoped to find it, not only for the liquor, but because it contained personal papers and a large-scale map of Chiapas. Tolling set a lot of store by maps. The trouble was, he had looked too close to the wreckage of the plane. From where he sat, the old man could not see the clearing in which they had come down, but he could see, like shafts between the great trees, the glow of light which marked it. The clearing was of no interest to him. There was nothing edible growing there. Except where the plane had cut a swathe and made a scorched area, it was all oleander, high as a man.

They were dead and he was on his own, all right. He was sorry about them. It had been fine, the way they dragged him away from the burning wreckage, the way they splinted him and fixed up his shelter under his directions, and the generosity with which they divided the salvaged supplies with him. They had wanted to try carrying him out, but he knew that that would never have worked. Even then, when they stood before him, ready to go, he'd figured that forty miles of this kind of bush, with the swamp to cross, was going to be tough going for a couple of complete greenhorns. The bearing of their failure upon his own situation began to impress him. To free his mind of it, he concentrated on the suitcase. He was a trifle lightheaded, not with the familiar fever of malaria, but with a giddiness and feeling of infection which came from the poisons being manufactured in his leg.

He tried the catches. The two locks snapped open. Good. He lifted the lid. The top layer of socks and some brightly striped drawers kept the rest of the contents snug. Under them were various papers in several bundles, the folded map, and the two bottles. He did not touch them, but sat studying the labels and seals. The best, bottled in bond, aged, one hundred proof, the kind of liquor the very existence of which a man completely forgot in the little towns of the back country, drinking barbed wire, *aguardiente*, most of the time, and Habanero when he was flush.

The pale golden-brown contents of the two bottles promised him pleasure and relief from pain. The continuous throbbing of his leg this last week had at first broken his sleep, and the last few nights had allowed him to doze only in snatches. With one of these under his belt . . .

Seldom in his life had he tasted liquor of this class, mostly that time he found gold and sold out, and went clear to Mexico City. It had been his plan then to go to the States, with all the cash he had, but Mexico City had everything, even blondes. He suspected that that blonde of his was synthetic, but if so she had done a job of it. She was blonde all over. He frowned over her name. Rita — Rita something, claimed to be half Polish. She was expensive as hell, but worth every peso of it. The memory of those six weeks had stayed good for years. She'd gone in for all sorts of mixed drinks, but he had mistrusted them; that was when he got onto the fine Bourbon. It goes down like tea, and it's as strong as anything that ever hit your stomach.

He closed the valise. Drawing his machete, he cut a length of narrow, flexible *liana*. The act took two flips of the wrist. He handled his machete with old skill, but he paused between the strokes and afterwards set the blade down as though it were heavily weighted. There was no more strength in him. With the *liana* he slung the valise from his shoulder. Then he sheathed the machete and went through the long, careful, effortful process of getting to his feet and onto the crutches Tolling and McDaniels had made for him.

2

It was about a hundred feet from where he stood to his shelter. He had come so far only because he had cleaned out everything edible nearer, at least everything that grew in places open enough for him to penetrate. Cutting a path into the really thick places was quite beyond him in his condition. As he inched his way back, he made a remarkable picture. He wore a fairly new, straw sombrero, set aslant on his longish, white hair. His three weeks' beard was scraggly, curly, and nearly as white as the finer hair of his head. His face was deeply tanned, of a sickly color under the tan, lined and sunken.

He wore a strong khaki shirt and slacks, purchased with the advance money the young men had given him, but these now looked as if he had had them for years. They were filthy. The shirt

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had several rips in it. The left trouser leg, over his bad leg, had been cut away at the knee. On his left foot, the newly purchased, high laced boot had likewise been cut away above the ankle, leaving a sort of shoe. In between was the splint, fashioned out of pieces of the wrecked plane and wrapped with materials which had become gray-black, fuzzy, rotting rags. In his left breast pocket, four slender, white hearts of palm stuck up like candy sticks. His machete and knife hung at his waist, the little valise, woefully heavy, slid around against his back and his side.

He concentrated on his panting progress, leaving for later the endless, rambling self-communions of a man who has been long alone.

The forest in front of him lightened, there were the same brilliant shafts and streaks ahead of him as had marked the neighborhood of the clearing. He came out on the edge of the river beside his shelter. He rested, looking at the river. It was familiar; a great part of his life had been spent along it. Its presence supported him.

Within easy distance of him were a number of traps, the simple arrangements of sticks the Indians make for catching the smallest animals. He scanned them carefully, without expectation; he'd been living and moving around here too long for the little creatures to be coming by.

His shelter was a simple affair of palm branches and a tarpaulin, a lean-to facing the river. One end was over the roots of a massive mahogany, the other was partly closed by a smaller tree. In a rise of ground between two roots was his bed, a pile of palm branches and a blanket with the mosquito net suspended above. Behind that, on the raised shelf of another root, were his rifle and his supplies. In front of the shelter was a meager pile of firewood beside the black circle of his fire. The edge of the circle was cut by a frying pan with a spoon in it and a blackened tin can, its top bent backwards to form a sort of handle.

His supplies were cached in the empty tin cans beside the rifle. In one was a small bag of salt and another bag containing a handful of rice. A second was half full of carefully saved cigarette stubs, and on top of them an empty quinine bottle containing two whole cigarettes. In others were some money, some pieces of newspaper, a dozen matches wrapped elaborately in part of an oilskin tobacco pouch, and a bottle of insect repellent, nearly empty. Between the bed and the fireplace stood a badly dented, Army issue canteen, its upper part fire-blackened, lacking its canvas cover and its cup. Most of the cans showed the effects of fire. The rifle had a charred place on the stock. Along the barrel were a number of spots of rubbed-down rust.

After a moment's hesitation, he took out one of the whole cigarettes and laid it carefully on a root. He hefted the canteen, and was relieved to find it full. It had become difficult to remember whether he had stuck to his routine of working his way to the water and filling it before he went looking for food. He tended to his fire, uncovering the coals, laying on twigs and bark, fanning gently with his hat, until he had a dependable little flame.

Daylight would last at least an hour more, but already the river was beginning to fill with shadow, while the sunlight became sharper, more emphatic, on the far bank. The occasional bole of a great tree, exposed directly to the light, turned gold. The water was a living, dull metal, moving in an oily, quiet, powerful, yet sluggish way, with blue here and there in its swirls. The Chacaljá — the river had a dozen names, Spanish, Nahua, Mayan; from among them this one, the one the Indians of the headwaters gave it, was the one which to him best meant the whole. The name Concha used for it. The hut he had lived in with Concha hadn't been far from here, when he'd been a young sprout. A doll, a kind of toy, a live toy who could love you and keep house and laugh and make you laugh. He wanted not to think of her, but could not stop the sequence, first of Concha in those good months and then of how she screamed and wept when El Nopo, that bandit bastard, and the troops of his private revolution came through and took her along with them. You were a young Gringo and you worked for the oil company. You were a Gringo and strong and wonderful, and you were supposed to be able to cope with anything, and you stood there looking into the rifle barrels while they tied your girl on a saddle.

That was what started off the first big drunk. He quit his job clearing trail and got really in Dutch with the company. That was the start of a lot, he guessed. He certainly had stayed drunk a long time.

3

He opened the valise and got out the bottles. They were fair prey, and maybe, if he got out of here, he could use the clothing, but the papers belonged to Tolling. Some of them were handwritten letters. They ought to be sent home. Holding one of the bottles, thinking of that, he really thought out and faced the first fact. In the end of the dry season as it was now, with the bush at its driest and openest, you could figure on a couple of healthy men taking ten days to go forty miles, if they didn't hit a made trail further down the river and if they were green at bush travel. You could figure even on two weeks. But you could not figure on three. He knew where he was, as he had told them, about five miles below El Salto, the first fall, and forty miles above Ocantán. At Ocantán there were a Swiss and a number of Mexicans, and at least two double canoes with outboard motors. They would have been here by now; the river was low and mild. Being completely green, the young men had not gotten out. There was only

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one answer to that one, they were dead by now. Easy enough to happen, too. So here he was.

He opened the bottle slowly and smelled of it. Then he lit the cigarette. Boy, this was life. A remark he had heard somewhere came to mind: "James, serve the champagne in tin cups, the gentlemen wish to rough it." He took a pull at the bottle. It was really prime stuff. He had smoked little the last few days, because the smoke tasted foul, but now his cigarette was good. He meditated taking a swig of water, but decided in favor of letting the liquor glow in his mouth and throat and stomach. He set the bottle down with care and smoked, looking out.

The old Chacaljá — a few miles above here he had lived with Concha, when he was a young sprout full of beans and had a regular job. If you could go there now, you probably could not find the spot, any more than you would be able to find any trace of this camp a few years from now. How long ago was that? He had to do a little counting to figure that this was nineteen fifty, not forty-nine. Usually a little thing like that made no difference. He came out in nineteen hundred, the leap year when it didn't leap, the turn of the century. He liked to say that, after the lapse of time had made it impressive, "I came out here at the turn of the century, when I was a young sprout," so that back when he was hardly fifty the Americans had taken to calling him Old Century. Those two boys, Tolling and McDaniels, had called him "Mr. Century" when they first met him. The cigarette was half gone. He took another good pull at the bottle.

Pretty nearly half a century, and not much to show for it. No sign of that fortune he'd been going to make. He'd had one real friend, Whittaker, and old Whit was long gone. Up this same river, too. He wished old Whit were here now to sit with him and pull at the bottle and watch the day go over the Chacaljá and night come down. It would be a pretty night, with a moon, if it didn't cloud up. There'd been a lot of clouds around lately. Be a hell of a note if the rains started tonight and ruined this binge. Old Whit had said one time, when they were both good and drunk, that it was a pity he, Century, hadn't stayed in school and gotten an education. He'd have been a poet or a philosopher, Whit had said. Funny thing, he'd felt something that way about Whit.

Apart from Whit, he couldn't say he'd had any real friends. Knew a hell of a lot of men of different kinds, yes, liked some of them, been able to work and live with a lot of them, but not friends, not really. First he guessed he was too brash, and then maybe too much of a rum-bum. Besides, the more you live in the bush and along the river, the more you want to be let live inside yourself.

There had been a variety of women, some of whom he remembered sharply, some of whom were mere whorehouse blurs, vague punctuations to drinking, but none of them had lasted. He'd have liked to have had Eufemia last, but Eufemia was a Tehuana, and she ended up by going home with a Tehuano man, the way they always do. He guessed his kid was a good Tehuano, speaking Zapotec as his mother tongue. The chief thing he could say for all these years was that he'd never worked hard, not steadily that is, and he'd had a lot of fun.

Or maybe the chief thing was that here he was, sick, old, and crippled, and still alive after three weeks. Most white men would be dead by now. The grub left him wouldn't have lasted ten days. If his leg cleared up he could tough it out indefinitely, even after the rains came if he had to. And the two young men were dead. Apart from his leg there was nothing the matter with him. Of course, he guessed he'd been orating to himself a lot, but anyone does that who lives much alone in the bush. He had a drink to his own mastery of the wild country.

As that drink took hold his mood changed. He thought of the great joke of being hired by those two young fellows and how, to clinch the job, he had artfully let them draw out of him every fool story he had ever heard of gold being found. Anyone knew it was all bunk. He'd seen it proven a dozen times. What a joke on them — and now on him, too.

4

A CURASSOW, big and black looking, lit on a branch not twenty feet from him. He stiffened and reached for his rifle, almost tasting the meat. The bird flew off again. He swore. He had moved too soon, before it got settled. He looked at the little package of rice and his slivers of heart of palm, studying the rice for a long time. He looked at the bottles, then out over the river. The higher bank opposite was completely in shadow, and the shadow was mounting rapidly up the trees. With a manner of finality he built up the fire, poured water in the tin can, and set it to boil. He watched it in a sort of blankness until the water bubbled properly, then with the same manner of finality he poured in the last of his rice and added salt. He cut the hearts of palm carefully into small pieces and added them. The extravagance which wiped out his entire larder was committed under compulsion. As soon as the food was in, he drank again, this time following the drink with a brief chaser of tepid water. He did not want to empty the canteen and be forced to the difficult process of going down the bank to the water. Do that in the morning, on a morning drink.

If only his leg started mending he'd be all right. If he could get around even as well as he had at first, he wouldn't worry for grub or for being able to tough it out. He'd last until he could walk like a man and then, rains or no rains, he'd get out to Ocantán. They would have made sure he was dead.

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He chuckled. It had happened before. Old Century dead and buried a lot of times, and he turns up again. Just a bad old man, but powerful hard to kill. In one of the tin cans, underneath bits of newspaper, he still had a hundred pesos, part of the advance the boys had given him. He meditated on the simple facilities for pleasure in Ocantán, the known limits of hospitality and the extension of those limits to be made by the judicious buying of drinks all round, and he planned himself a pleasant stretch of time once he got out. The Swiss, Anthaler, set a good table.

The rice was done. The stew lacked meat, but latterly he had been eating little, both to stretch his small reserve and because he lacked appetite. Now his stomach had come magnificently to life under the influence of the whiskey. The stew was delicious. Cooked, it just about filled the can. He cleaned it all out, at first greedily, then with more leisure and appreciation of enjoyment. When there was nothing left but a few inaccessible grains, with a sense of lavishness and pleasure he threw the can high. It sailed through the air, turning over on itself, and dropped beyond the bank. He listened for a splash, and was disappointed when he could not hear one. The dinner called for another good slug of Bourbon and the other whole cigarette. He stretched and sighed luxuriously.

Briefly the strong light remained on the treetops across the river, while the wall of the main mass was mysteriously blue; then the light went, and almost without transition the far wall became a black strip rising to the sky while the river itself, which had been dark, acquired reflections of light. Beyond those trees, to his left, he could see indications of the moonrise. Tomorrow would be the full moon. He greeted the night with another drink.

The bottle in his hand brought his mind back to the boys and the plane ride with them. He had been pretty well lost until, just before the engine stopped working, he had recognized El Salto and the S-bend of the river by the big swamp. The swamp it was most likely that had got the boys. Then everything had come unstuck at once, and he hadn't done anything but pray until they pulled him out from under the wing and brought him round. It had been a satisfaction, once he was himself, to tell them instantly just where they were. He remembered now their look of respect, just as he remembered trying to tell them how to get by in the bush, and feeling even then that you couldn't tell it to someone, it had to be learned. You had to live it.

He could not exactly say that his leg had stopped hurting, but he didn't mind it much. He wished he had some coffee to go with his dinner and lead back into the drinks in a proper manner. He wished Whittaker were here. There was mist in the enclosure of air over the river now, and the moon, coming up beyond the ocean of trees, began to reach the upper wisps of it and make them glow. As a result of light at the higher level, the river itself was lost in darkness. It would be nice to have Concha here now, Concha or—he remembered a phrase—or the equivalent thereof. It was MacNamara at Frontera who used to say that. Concha or the equivalent thereof. He could imagine it, but Whit would be better. It would be the end of both bottles, sure enough, if he could turn up again.

Old Century, fifty years in the bush, and what had he to show for it? Lying here like a goddamned sultan, looking at the moonrise over the Chacaljá, with a full belly and a rotting leg, and more of the finest whiskey in the world than he could possibly get down in one night. That was a hell of a note. He held the bottle up to the moonlight to see how far he had lowered it, and as it was not even halfway yet, he drank again.

"Or the equivalent thereof." This stuff had no equivalent. MacNamara, he'd gone back to the States. A lot of them had gone back, some of them had stayed here, dead. Why did they all go back to the States? He could have gone back, two or three times, with a good bit of money in his pants, but each time, like that best of them all, his visit to Mexico City, he got to somewhere where the facilities were good and there he stayed until he was broke. It never made him feel bad, winding up broke. Who the hell wants to go back to the States? Drinking the best whiskey in the world on the moonlit banks of the Chacaljá, when by good rights he ought to be dead a week ago.

It seemed to him that there was some connection between the lowering of the level in the bottle and the lowering line of the shadow around him. He was not able to keep pace, however, and he did not really try, because to have emptied the bottle by the time the moonlight reached him would have been to force his pace unpleasantly and bring pleasure to an end too soon. It was just one of those fool ideas that used to amuse Whit. "Don't kill the bottle, just squeeze it slowly to death." That had been Whit.

5

He saw the moon, just short of full. He took its light on his face. The light was a ragged silver line along the edge of the cut-bank in front of him, and shortly, or he thought it was shortly, it reached the river. The fact that each change he was watching was totally familiar did not in the least decrease his delight in it. As drunk as he was beginning to be, his appreciation was intensified and he felt, as he had when he was young, and on other drunken occasions, that there was much more in this than the eye beheld. Although familiar it was unique, it was a manifestation of something great which hovered just beyond the line of comprehension.

The thin mists lay between him and the moon,

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forming streaks of luminosity. The jungle on the other side was a jagged silhouette of deepest blue-black with silver edges and curious sprays and spurts of silver, or of white, ice-cold fire along the top. The river swirled black designs in the brightness of its reflections, the moonpath broad and flecked, breaking up at the edges, merging into an area of blackness on each side. The ice-cold fire lay on his hand; it lay, barred and mottled with shadow, around him and between him and the edge of the bank. The thing was enough in itself — he needed no one, lacked for no company.

He drank slowly but at some length. The liquor now really did go down like tea. This is what Old Century's got, he told himself. He's got the Chacaljá River. He's got this. I got this and I got the bush, and the satisfaction of knowing that even this old and bad off I can stay alive here and have the love of it. This is what I've got and it ain't hay. He put his bottle to his lips, tilting his head well back, and felt insulted and fooled when it ran dry at the second swallow.

He looked at the empty bottle and then at the untouched one. He did not seem anywhere near drunk enough for the amount that had gone down. He hefted the empty bottle, set it down, picked up the full one, and as he did so, feeling the second bottle's weight, the inner realizations which had been working to the surface ever since he saw these two miraculous containers, which he had been holding back and denying since they began gathering days before, came to the top.

There was the simple, central fact of his leg. It didn't only hurt him like fury, it was not only swelling, it smelled. Unable to wash or change his clothes, he had gathered about him a general, ripe, definite smell, but after enough time has gone by, a man ceases to notice his own odor. This was different. He knew perfectly well what it was and what it meant. With food and shelter, still he and his leg had only a few more days to go, days of increasing pain and wretchedness. And he was at the end of gathering food. Right now he had strength and a sense of well-being out of that God-sent bottle, but he could not survive on that. He was through.

It was, of course, quite unnecessary for him to restate all the factors of his situation to himself. He knew the bush, the river, himself, and how men die much too well. He simply admitted their sum and told himself, This is what I've *had*. So now what?

The surface of the river was now entirely covered with a low-lying mist which lay in slight, irregular waves, shining white, with decorations of soft, bluish shadow. From the main body, higher elements detached themselves here and there. This soft brightness gave a new background for the silhouettes of the growths immediately in front of him, a new value to the dark, silver-topped block of the far side. This phenomenon, too, he knew well. He had been looking forward to it. He nodded his head sagely. He would go to the river, he would join the good old Chacaljá.

Slowly, with great seriousness, he peeled the wrapping off the second bottle and loosened the cork. He put the bottle down. A man should leave some kind of word. He had an idea. If he left a message in the first bottle, the chances were fair that even if it was Indians who found it, they would bring it to Ocantán. He opened Tolling's valise once more, and searched in it uncertainly by the moonlight. He found what seemed to be a blank piece he could tear off a sheet, and a pencil. For a long time he pondered and frowned. Finally he wrote, "*Sirvase pagar al portador 1 peso.* Died drunk and happy. Old Century William Tecumseh Carpenter." He had trouble making the letters. He folded the sheet, and on the outside, on both sides, printed in unsteady letters, "*Llevase á don Alberto Anthaler — 1 Peso.*" After a little thought, he added a cross to impress the Indians.

He rolled the paper in a squill, pushed it into the bottle, and watched it unfold. That was about the best he could do to preserve himself for posterity. It would certainly bother Anthaler and the rest as the news spread along the river to know how he came to end up drunk on such elegant liquor, in his predicament. He corked the bottle. Then he made a cigarette from a piece of newspaper out of the storage can and some of his stubs. He smoked it slowly and gravely, watching the dance of the mist-strands, the very slow, dreamy, coiling flow of the main body of the mist on the river.

When the cigarette was gone, he took a short drink from the second bottle. Forcing it into a trousers pocket, he got his crutches, and pulled himself erect much more easily than he had expected. Once he was up he was quite steady, which surprised him and gave him a moment of pride. Then he set to the serious business of getting to the edge of the bank, lowering himself to a sitting position, and letting himself down to the water. Anyway, he thought with satisfaction, I don't have to make it back up again.

At the water's edge, the mist reached to a short distance over his head. Around him was a soft, fuzzy, cool gray-whiteness, and above him a soft glow melting towards a defined central brightness where he faced the moon. The water took his bad leg wonderfully, cooling and easing it. He let himself in, supporting himself on his crutches. If anything, it was chilly in the river, but the sense of his body's lightness, the feeling of cleanliness, and the complete easing of his leg were sheer delight.

A down tree projected from the bank near him, one end firmly bedded near the shore, the other bobbing and weaving faintly in a slow eddy. He worked his way to it, moving slowly in the supporting, hindering water.

Under his weight the trunk sank lower, so that it

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was no trick to sit on it and balance with the water up to his waist. He let his crutches float away. The old Chacaljá, he thought, this is what I've got, this is what I've had. The high boot laced on his healthy leg kept the good water from washing about it as it did the other. He wished he'd taken it off, but it was too late for that now. Balancing on the log, he dug out the bottle, hoping the water hadn't got into the liquor. That was one place the river did not belong. He took a solid drink, his face raised towards the soft whiteness which covered him. Faintly here and there he could make out the outline of the black shadow of a tree. It seemed to him that he was experiencing the essence of the river.

He was sitting in the middle of a misty sphere, which in the direction of the moon contained a great, luminous circle with that brightness in the center. I sure as hell wish Whit was here, I wish he could see this. The good old Chacaljá. He felt the whole river, the vastness of it, waiting. The river and all that that term embraced in its true sense. The slow waters were waiting for him, the *lagartos*, the alligators, were waiting for him. Along the banks the countless roots which drew their life from the river waited for him, and so did the big and little fishes, the water grasses, the buzzards, the insects, and all the various and beautiful snakes, the *nauiacas*, the *masacuates*, the *culebras*, and the rest. The only people who did not form part of the river, and who therefore did not have sense enough to be waiting for him to join them, were the men who lived along it. They would be curious, perhaps even worried, about his disappearance; the others would know. The graceful animals who drank at the river and who fished in it, the deer, the lions, the iguanas, the jaguars, the big, slow-moving *dantas*, would know, the mists, and the days and nights, the bugs darting over the water, the gravels and sands and rocks. He was conscious of them all, and he embraced them.

The sphere with its area of brightness, in which he could see nothing and beyond which he could see everything, contracted and expanded. The moon-spot tended to whirl, or else he was whirling. It seemed to him that he had experienced this manifestation before. He took another good, long pull at the bottle, a longer pull than he really wanted, forcing himself, because he did not think that he would get to take many more. Holding the bottle by the neck with its bottom resting on his thigh, he stared at the moon-spot. It was all waiting for him. He knew it all; if Whit were here right now he thought he could explain to him what that thing was you felt in the beautiful moments, that thing that had always been just out of reach when you watched the moonrise or the dawn, and at such times. His hand fell off the bottle, letting it go into the water with a faint gurgle. Slowly, rather majestically, he followed, his eyes closed, his mouth slightly open, slipping gently, almost noiselessly, into the river, in which he drifted limply, without motion of his own.

CHIMNEYS

by DONALD C. BABCOCK

THE hearth should rest upon the ground,
The fire upon the clay.
But chimneys reach beyond the bound,
They point another way.
The cellar holds the hearth in place,
But chimneys ruminate on space.

Where man makes war upon the cold
Are clustered little things.
Here copper shines as fair as gold,
And here the kettle sings.
Close to the soil a hearth must lie:
A chimney breaks into the sky.

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"My father, grandfather, uncle, and great-uncles were preachers," writes CONRAD RICHTER. *"Their fathers had been tradesmen, soldiers, country squires, blacksmiths, and farmers, and I think that in my passion for early American life and people I am a throwback to these." One of our ranking historical novelists, he is the author of the best novel about the Southwest,* The Sea of Grass, *and has just completed his big trilogy of* The Trees, The Fields, *and* The Town, *describing the opening up of Ohio.*

THAT EARLY AMERICAN QUALITY

by CONRAD RICHTER

1

A SURPRISING number of us believe today that you and I are still the original American product, union made and established in 1776. Hollywood and best-selling novelists have helped the legend. It is so much easier to cast familiar modern persons in old-time roles than the difficult and authentic departed forefather. These modern characters are our ancestors, we are told. This is the way it was. The characters wear costume and sometimes speak historic words. But that's really about as far as most of them get into valid early American life and feeling. The situations in which they find themselves and their manner of behavior and response are as modern as the motorcar.

Meanwhile the true character and nature of our vanished ancestors have grown so strange and unknown to later generations of Americans as to be almost foreign and unreal. Already the Western horseback pioneers of no more than fifty and sixty years ago are vastly altered, cheapened, dressed up. They are scarcely recognizable by one who knew them. And yet they are commonly accepted. The present generation knows no other. Modern historians, caught in the complicity of expedience and self-defense, repeat that the American character has not changed. We may wear different clothes, but if you look at us closely you will still see the number thirteen riding boots of George Washington. So the later Romans, looking back on the days of Caesar and Pompey, must have spoken longingly and tragically to each other at some steep and dangerous dip in their decline.

Our fault has not been so much the betrayal of our forefathers as the shortsighted abandonment of a vital thing that might have kept us on the track. Some of the bounties of those early Americans we try to keep alive today — free speech, trial by jury, separation of church and state. But the most precious thing, the temper of the men who produced and established these bounties and privileges, has been ignored.

Our newer generations are scarcely aware that there was such a temper, only a mind. They see the new pictures, read the new books. The musty old books, the dusty fine-print historical collections, the opinions of men who lived and observed on the spot, they seldom see. They take for granted the supremacy of their modern world. They observe clerks streaming from office buildings at five and laborers from industrial plants at four. They think clerks and laborers were always like that; not nearly so well off, of course, but with the same expressionless faces. Indeed they must have been a lot duller. Didn't they have to work in the old days until six at night and start at some unholy hour in the morning!

I have no notion that anything I say will much disturb their thinking. People believe today what they wish to believe or are told, not necessarily what is true or likely to be true. We are told and we want desperately to believe that we are still undiluted and unchanged Americans. And yet an observant man approaching sixty years of age may have seen with his own eyes during his lifetime, as I have, great changes in American character. A few years ago I interviewed many old-time men and women who patiently told me things of their early life I wished to know. It was plain then that there had been not only a considerable change between that time and the time when I was a boy, but between my youth and the youth of these old men and women. It was also obvious, while I was working among old records in libraries, that farther back there had been still earlier changes. Indeed change has been apparently the one constant factor in American life and character.

In the eighteen-fifties a homesick native American made a pilgrimage. We think of nostalgia for the

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good old days as illusory because it has occurred at various stages in our history. But it has occurred at these stages because of the historic presence of actual successive changes in American life. This man was looking for a kind of people he had known in his youth and prime. He had come to Ohio as a boy and spent his life among the early pioneers who had cut down the heavy forests and turned them into farms.

Now he was an old man. The breed he had known were mostly in their graves. The current present generation had changed. He had heard that out in Wisconsin and Minnesota pioneers were then cutting down the forests and plowing up the new land for farms. He reasoned that there he would find his own generation still alive. It had simply moved farther west. He wanted to see and talk to his own kind again before he died. He went to these places and traveled about, seeking hopefully. In the end he came back to Ohio a defeated and wiser man. He told the few of his kind that survived that the forests and stump farms were there, but the people were quite different. Times had changed. Their own race had been swallowed up. He believed that it would never be seen on earth again.

2

Save in research I never knew the particular type of pioneer this man sought. But I understand how he felt. There were still abundant in my youth certain types of American that today in their turn have almost disappeared from our scene. These types, now that I look back on them, appear to have had one thing in common. It was a kind of hardihood and vigor beside which most Americans seem soft and squeamish today.

For example, when I was a boy, coal miners from our town left for work on miners' trains at four and five o'clock in the morning. On arriving at the mines they went underground for the day's work. At five and six o'clock that night the trains returned. To my never failing delight as a small boy, the miners left their trains on the run. Also, they would run part of the way home, although some of them lived three and four miles in the country. It was a common thing to see a whole trainload of black-faced men jogging like an immense football squad down the street, their empty dinner buckets and coffee kettles on their arms. It was a sight that seldom failed to energize me.

But Americans were more easily energized then. When I was in the lower grades, the high school boys spent half their nights in the vigorous sport of playing deer, or hare and hounds. They would run for miles through the dark countryside, racing over hills and finding their way through inky black woods. The energetic practice has ceased. But I still remember gratefully the triumph of their spirits and bodies over the rough terrain, like deer.

There was another type of American in my youth, who almost never ran. Yet I think he held up the peculiar early American trait of vigor and temper more than any other. If you were born before the turn of the century you may recognize him. No single word ever completely describes a man, but there is one that gives us a good idea. The word has disappeared from the current scene almost as generally as the man it typifies. That word is manliness. I do not mean physique. Some of those I knew were small men, but you instantly felt the quality I mean, a sort of independent, sometimes crabbed hardihood that stood up for its rights and took you on at any odds. It was a quality of mind and spirit rather than of body, still more of creed and belief. An early nineteenth century American once told a visiting European, "We have no king over here. Every man is his own king." The kind of man I refer to had been brought up to believe it. Often poor, perhaps uneducated and in homespun, he considered himself sovereign of his own life and domain. He acted like a sovereign, and if you wanted his respect, he expected you to be the same.

I recall a pair of these men I saw as late as the nineteen-twenties. They were walking down the dirt road of a Pennsylvania backwoods valley where I lived. It was in the late afternoon. Around six o'clock that morning they had tramped four miles to work. They had spent the day at hard labor. Now they were walking the four miles home. What held me was the way they moved, like rude backwoods kings, in the middle of the road and the devil take the car behind them. Just the way they set down their feet and held their heads told of a flow of blood and vitality of life that now after twenty-five years straightens me and gives me joy to recall it. They were perhaps in their forties. I have seen very old men with the same unconquered spirit. They would go to their Maker soon, but until then they would be men. You can see a few of these in the Civil War sketches of Winslow Homer.

Not all of this type were laborers. Some were in the professions, gentlemen. Many were farmers. They were to be found among blacksmiths, millers, bridge builders, squires, stoneworkers, drovers, tradesmen. I knew several such merchants, but butchers were the most extreme and magnificent specimens of the breed. Powerful, doughty Hectors standing in their boots, they scraped and smiled not for customer or sheriff. Schoolmasters, too. In my youth I have been deservedly shaken by more than one man teacher who in his day feared neither pupil, parent, nor politician. But they in turn were weaklings beside an earlier principal my mother and father spoke about with admiration and affection till they died. He was legendary, his discipline kingly, and yet such was his power that he neither beat nor shook. Even his enemies respected him.

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I would not have you believe that all these men were noble like the latter. There were some despots and even a few public drunkards among them. Many of this type were unlovely in this or that respect. The important thing was that they had the indispensable early American quality. The greatest fundamental quality of a nation is men. And the greatest fundamental quality of men is manhood. You can build understanding, culture, and progress on manhood, but you can never build manhood on mere intelligence, culture, and progress. Character strength and manhood are from within.

3

WHAT these early Americans had that so many of us today do not have are a sense of sovereignty, a rank vitality, and a deep unswerving belief in the dignity of man, beginning with themselves. We use this phrase a great deal today, but what we mean is something else — privileges, rights, comforts. The vigorous, sometimes crusty, old-time Americans of this type had dignity of man bred in the bone. It was their creed. Their home, farm, shop, or merely the place where they stood was their castle. When they spoke, it was with strong, often rude conviction. They didn't believe in flattery. Their loyalty was great, but they had a greater respect for discipline and training. For your own good they let you work your way out of your ordinary difficulties. Once your burden became too heavy, no one was quicker to help. If you offered them money, they were insulted. Their friendship wasn't for sale. They were slow to recognize a man's worth, often willful, stubborn and shrewd, upon occasion arrogant, and some even piratical and cruel. But I have seldom seen them frightened, cowed, bewildered, beaten down by life, running with the sheep.

They went to their graves as they had lived, sometimes leaving explicit and tyrannical wills. That was their right and duty, they supposed. They believed in liberty for themselves and for you, if you owned any belief in it yourself. Americanism to them meant independence, and they couldn't get enough of it.

As a boy I knew many of them. They did not lay hands on my head and say what a nice child I was. The most they gave me was a shrewd appraising glance, after which they held their tongue and judgment. It was up to me to prove myself. Both my grandfathers were such men. Far from being baby-sitters or child-spoilers, they were men into whose presence grandchildren went with considerable awe or at least hesitation. If they were agreeable to a grandchild, it was a mark of being singled out. My mother and father felt it an honor when my mother's father, a tall gaunt man like Lincoln, called at their house. He was a parson widely known for his dry humor and relentless travels by horseback and buggy to serve a wide mountain and country area. It took two churches and an overflow service, all at the same time, to hold the mourners at his funeral. And yet I never recall him taking the slightest notice of me or my brothers. My other grandfather once when I was a boy paid me the great compliment of drawing me a glass of tap water with his own hand. It made a great impression on me.

But by the time my father came along, times were changing. He had the virtues of the older generation. Until his thirties he was a storekeeper and would open the store at six in the morning, close it at nine or ten at night. He handled heavy barrels of molasses alone and once a week would drive a three-horse wagon of provisions to the mining patches.

Last summer an elderly coal miner with an Irish accent told me he had read *The Sea of Grass*. "That colonel in there," he said, "didn't you have your father in mind when you wrote it?" I was a little startled.

But my father was not so severe as my grandfathers. The rugged old American breed was declining. He could be very entertaining and jovial, especially to visitors and other children than his own. A kind of manly reserve remained between him and his sons, none of which has his vitality and vigor. The blood has thinned out, and I for one can say it has not been to our advantage.

This process of thinning, declining, or civilizing, if you wish, has been going on from Maine to California, but it has been slower in Maine as it has in Vermont, Texas, and a few other hardier states. The causes of the decline have been fairly guessed at. But I have heard less speculation into the causes of the strong product in the first place. What made him that way originally? What were the sources of his character? Can we moderns in our great need for vitality and fortitude today learn from some of the things that shaped our grandfathers?

It is a curious sidelight on our modern democracy that the common man today is considered a clod beside the expert. Let him be a pauper, and he is showered with attention, but pauper or independent, he is unimportant except in the aggregate. Outside of voting, polling, and giving testimony in court, his opinions are unworthy, his knowledge and experience obsolete. As in Russia, he must recant the old and embrace the new, or his earthy, stubborn mind can expect to be liquidated. In most fields the expert is dictator. He revises history in the light of modern knowledge and propaganda. He proves that what took place in some past age was in reality something quite different from that recorded by contemporary observers; that when a historical participant said one thing, he often meant another.

Our forefathers held the belief, often stated, that the virtues of their character, such as they had,

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were the result of their conflict with the wilderness, with hardship and privation. Even the second and third generations attributed their "snap and dash" to their inheritance from pioneer fathers. In our day Arnold Toynbee has pointed out the historical growth of nations that had to fight adversity as compared with the decline of those provided with comfort and prosperity. But privation grows less and less popular with every modern political campaign. It seems that discipline and privation are conditions that must be established by Providence and are not readily self-imposed by ease-loving Americans. If this is true, we need not complain at what inescapable difficulties now confront us. We asked for them, but we didn't think that Providence was listening.

4

There were other strengthening influences than privation and hardship in our ancestors' day. One of these undoubtedly was their robust religion. Skeptics and unbelievers flourished as now, but the religious were actually religious, not merely good or humane. Their beliefs, often narrow and sometimes bigoted, supported them. Where today will you find a traveler in a hotel getting down on his knees in his nightshirt to pray before getting into bed with a stranger as in Emerson's time? Where, oh, where is the landlord of the inn, who stands at the head of his table to pray aloud before starting to carve? Indeed where is the house that prays before meals at all? In my youth I had to endure long and sometimes terrible prayers at every table under which I was invited to stow my legs. I recall some of them as almost unintelligible, filled with groans. It was very hard for one boy to keep his face straight, doubly hard for two. But today I understand those enigmatic prayers better. I have found that hypocrites' prayers, like their conversation, are generally fluent, under control. The groans and moans and dark unfathomable phrases were, on the other hand, symptoms of a deep inarticulate fervor and passion, an acknowledgment of unspoken hardship and suffering, of yearning and perhaps of secret sin.

A less-considered source of strength among our earlier citizenry was the custom that I may call oratorical enlargement. By this I mean the hearty and profound vigor of thought and phrase in olden times. It is obsolete and considered inexcusably flowery today. It was employed generally by the better classes, but the lower classes had their own variety. A man was "a man for a' that," "one of nature's own noblemen," "a rough diamond" or "a worthless and rascally specimen of the human race." A woman was "of the fair sex," "a lady to her finger tips" or "a common miserable hussy," both common and miserable having different meanings then than now. Men were "profoundly penetrated." They felt "the iron enter the soul." They said such things as "fear is a stranger to his bosom," "add to the courage of the lion the sagacity of the fox," and "give me liberty, or give me death." It was not all affectation. Many of our forefathers actually saw and felt things in this deep-energy manner, the classic frame of mind of heroes from Ulysses to Abraham Lincoln. It took a robust man to look on the world in such a fashion. His powerful thought and expression produced in turn strong currents of energy that further stirred and supported him. As sovereign man's heroic cast declined, his speech declined also. It would seem silly for the kind of men that we are to speak in that manner today. We are better fitted to say "Phooey!" and "Nuts!"

I have sometimes speculated on another possible source of old-time manliness. Its age reached into my boyhood. I mean when man lived more in the sight and companionship of the nobler animals. It happened that the braver of my grandfathers was all his life a rider and driver of horses, while my less courageous if blunt-spoken grandfather was employed in his youth taking care of sheep. You may well believe this a coincidence. However, the most manly class left in our country today is of the West and of farms where the horse is still in active use. The horse has always had, I suspect, its effect on men. A handful of Spaniards with horses vanquished the entire Mexican civilization. When I was a boy there were always horses on the street, some of them spirited and unpredictable, and I can promise you the street was a more exciting place then. We looked with especial interest and delight on certain driving horses we knew, some of them high-steppers. They gave us the feeling they might bolt at a moment's notice. The driver, sometimes a lady or boy, had to be alert and hold them in. Tension and spirit were in the air, made life richer and pulses a little faster. Even a team of slow, powerful, and well-matched draft horses stirred physical admiration and a certain setup in the energies of the beholder. Who today feels excitement or even takes a second look at a passing car or truck!

I do not mean to limit man's animals to the horse. I have a suspicion that many an old-time country boy has been bucked up unsuspectingly by the familiar sight of the common barnyard rooster who from early morning till dark used to stalk about with his head high, his gaudy flags flying, and every step perky. Always ready to fight, he was the picture of audacity and energy, mettle and valor. Today we have traded the companionship of the braver animal that uplifts for the companionship of the mechanical and inanimate that dull. Those living breeds we do continue we have transformed into weaker strains for meat, milk, eggs, and especially docility. Our ancestors would have scorned them. They preferred the challenging company of

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the spirited horse, the wild longhorn steer, and the gander that could put a boy to rout.

Early American character had other nourishment, I think, in rude educational freedom. There is in Pennsylvania a certain small rustic county. Today I do not know a single large town in it, not even the county seat. Yet a hundred years ago there were in this backwoods county a surprising number of private academies in farmhouses, basements, barns, and other buildings. They were supremely individual, marked by the mastership and ideas of one man. Their curriculum in the light of modern education might seem crude and fundamental. But they more than made up for it in the passion with which they taught Americanism and in the diversity of their product. Students were not turned out in the hurried mass production of our high schools, indoctrinated with one specialized system of ideas so that they might be easy prey both to life's difficulties and to any one political propaganda. Rather, all these small schools, considered together, turned out a product so divergent, nonconformist, and robust in its learning and beliefs that it could defy any one political dictation. They gave a vigorous hybrid mixture to the mind of our citizenry like linsey-woolsey to cloth, and as coal, ore, and limestone fused together make iron.

5

A FINAL influence on old-time character to be mentioned here, and one most to be disputed by moderns, is continence. That well-known poll of men who were willing to talk about their sexual prowess asserts that Americans were always like they are today. As one who has spent a good deal of time in the study of early American life, I would say that this is a grave reflection on the authenticity of the rest of the report. The implication is untrue.

There have always been aggressive American males, fewer then than now, I believe, but still a great many. However, our early form of society had a number of strong restraints that are not in effect today. One was the much higher chastity of unmarried girls and women, due to upbringing, religion, society safeguards, custom, and to the fairly sure shame in case of forced marriage. Married women were more virtuous for some of the same reasons. Perhaps a larger deterrent was the absence in those days of sexually exciting entertainment. The burlesque show was tame, almost puritanical, beside today's Broadway play and musical comedy, not to mention floor shows. Love songs in my youth were austere and prudish compared with the thinly veiled declarations of desire and proposals of hit-and-run consummation today. There were, of course, for our forefathers no movies, and when I was a boy we had little liquor consumption by youth. In my own home town, drinking by older men, always heavy, has if anything decreased, but drinking by youth and women has since then increased more than a thousand per cent.

The most effective restraint, however, was something else, in my opinion. Forty years ago I was a young reporter. Something happened in the news, I forget what, but a prominent physician commented to me privately on the unwillingness of his married women patients for the wifely duty. He said it was his greatest single complaint. Today, with the abundance of contraceptives and of erotic print and pictures, the situation has changed so that the pursued has often become the pursuer and manhood's most ardent impoverisher.

There was restraint on man's side, too. He was ignorant perhaps of the hardy Arab nomad who scorned the sex habits of his weaker brother in the towns. But he knew from first or second hand the indifference of the red man to woman's charms and his degree of physical hardihood and courage that only those whites who practiced Indian ways could hope to match.

There has been room here to mention only one or two changes in American character. Many such changes could have been cited. If I were to try to sum up in a few words the most fundamental and far-reaching change from our forefathers' character to ours, I should say it was the tendency, the method, of the modern world to relieve. If you have desire, relieve yourself. If you have trouble with your wife, relieve yourself of her legally or clandestinely. If you are tired, relieve your body, slouch, prop up your feet. If you are nervous, relieve yourself of responsibility, work, morals, religion. If you have enemies, relieve yourself of fear of them by appeasement. It is a process of lowering the evolutionary and manly standard that our ancestors so laboriously built up. Despite modern medical names, it is pure escape as when a man who irks under the restraints and difficulties of civilized life goes native at Santa Fe or Tahiti and feels the relief of reducing his standards to a more primitive and less demanding existence.

The old-fashioned method was more stubborn and audacious. Its effort was to overcome. Endure, bear, fight the good fight! Win if you can. If you can't, try again. The possibility of breaking was not unrecognized by our forefathers. The Forty-niners wrote on their wagons, "California or bust!" Some of them did. However, from the statistics, they did not break nearly so frequently as victims of the modern method. The sustained summoning of effort and energies built up in some mysterious way the spiritual and physical reservoirs of men and women. It produced that breed whose record so dwarfs us spiritually and physically today.

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"All my life," says CARL SANDBURG, *"I have been trying to learn to read, to see and hear, and to write. . . . At fifty, there was puzzlement as to whether I was a poet, a biographer, a wandering troubadour with a guitar, a Midwest Hans Christian Andersen, or a historian of current events." Now, at seventy-two, Mr. Sandburg's* Complete Poems *are to be published by Harcourt, Brace, and as he looked back over the long, dear toil of those poems, he wrote this essay as the preface for his new book.*

TRYING TO WRITE

by CARL SANDBURG

THE inexplicable is all around us. So is the incomprehensible. So is the unintelligible. Interviewing Babe Ruth in 1928 for the Chicago *Daily News*, I put it to him, "People come and ask what's your system for hitting home runs — that so?" "Yes," said the Babe, "and all I can tell 'em is I pick a good one and sock it. I get back to the dugout and they ask me what it was I hit and I tell 'em I don't know except it looked good."

Tyrus Raymond Cobb, who in twenty-four seasons played more games (3033), made more hits (4191), scored more runs (2244), and stole more bases (892) than any other player who ever wore spiked shoes — Ty Cobb at the end of one season got the question from sports writers, "We've watched you close this season and we find you've got eleven different ways of sliding to second. At what point between first and second do you decide which of those eleven ways you'll use?" Ty flashed, "I never think about it — I just slide!"

All around us the imponderable and the unfathomed — at these targets many a poet has shot his bullets of silver and scored a bull's-eye, or missed with dull pellets of paper.

Will Rogers, twirling his cowhand rope, insisted, "We are all ignorant but on different subjects." Picasso gives his slant as to his own ignorance related to that of others, "Why should I blame anybody else but myself if I cannot understand what I know nothing about?" And in Chicago we heard William Butler Yeats quote his father, "What can be explained is not poetry."

I have known newspaper staffs where a saying ran, "The way to be a Star Reporter is to break all the rules." I heard Steinbeck say regarding *Of Mice and Men*, "I began with an equation and after that the story wrote itself." Paganini had a formula: toil, solitude, prayer. Steichen after World War I put in a year making a thousand photographs of a white cup and saucer, a quest in light and shadow. Maugham crosses up Forster on how to write a novel and both heave Walter Scott into the ash can. Shakespeare wrote a certain amount of trash — because his theater had to have a new play next Tuesday.

Readers of poetry — and writers of it — can harken to Thomas Babington Macaulay in 1825: "Perhaps no person can be a poet, or even can enjoy poetry, without a certain unsoundness of mind." Does he say that if you are perfectly sane, a respectable citizen with a well-ordered mind, you shouldn't try writing poetry or reading it? And if you are a little "off the beam" mentally you will get along better in the poetry world? Some would decide it is well he used the word "perhaps," which leaves it open to debate along with the American proverb, "Every family tree has its nut."

There are poets of the cloister and the quiet corner, of green fields and the earth serene in its changes. There are poets of streets and struggles, of dust and combat, of violence wanton or justified, of plain folk living close to a hard earth as in the great though neglected poem *Piers Plowman*. There have been poets whose themes wove through both of the foregoing approaches. John M. Synge presented a viewpoint in this era ever worth care and thought: "When men lose their poetic feeling for ordinary life, and cannot write poetry of ordinary things, their exalted poetry is likely to lose its strength of exaltation, in the way men cease to build beautiful churches when they have lost happiness in building shops. Many of the older poets, such as Villon and Herrick and Burns, used the whole of their personal life as their material, and the verse written in this way was read by strong men, and thieves, and deacons, not by little cliques only."

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Poetry and politics, the relation of the poets to society, to democracy, to monarchy, to dictatorships — we have here a theme whose classic is yet to be written. Some of its implications I tried for in my dedication of a book to the poet Stephen Vincent Benét: —

> He knew the distinction between pure art and propaganda in the written or spoken word. He could sing to give men music, consolation, pleasure. He could intone chant or prayer pointing the need for men to act. He illustrated the code and creed of those writers who seek to widen the areas of freedom for all men, knowing that men of ideas vanish first when freedom vanishes. He saw that a writer's silence on living issues can in itself constitute a propaganda of conduct leading toward the deterioration or death of freedom. He wrote often hoping that men would act because of his words. He could have been Olympian, whimsical, seeking to be timeless amid bells of doom not to be put off.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, skilled rhymester, told a young poet: "When you write in prose you say what you mean. When you write in verse you say what you must." Having said this to the young man, Holmes bethought himself and then wrote, "I was thinking more especially of rhymed verse. Rhythm alone is a tether, and not a very long one. But rhymes are iron fetters; it is dragging a chain and ball to march under their incumbrance; it is a clog-dance you are figuring in when you execute your metrical *pas seul*. . . . You want to say something about the heavenly bodies, and you have a beautiful line ending with the word stars. . . . You cannot make any use of cars, I will suppose; you have no occasion to talk about scars; 'the red planet Mars' has been used already; Dibdin has said enough about the gallant tars; what is there left for you but bars? So you give up your trains of thought, capitulate to necessity, and manage to lug in some kind of allusion, in place or out of place, which will allow you to make use of bars. Can there be imagined a more certain process for breaking up all continuity of thought, than this miserable subjugation of intellect to the clink of well or ill matched syllables?"

The fact is ironic. A proficient and sometimes exquisite performer in rhymed verse goes out of his way to register the point that the more rhyme there is in poetry the more danger of its tricking the writer into something other than the urge in the beginning.

A well-done world history of poetry would tell us of the beginnings and the continuing tradition of blank verse, rhymed verse, ballads, ballades, sonnets, triolets, rondeaus, villanelles, the sestina, the pantoum, the hokku; also odes, elegiacs, idylls, lyrics, hymns, quatrains, couplets, ditties, limericks, and all the other forms. These are fixed, frozen, immutable; in a Japanese hokku you are allowed exactly seventeen syllables and if you try to make it in sixteen or eighteen you're out of luck. Such a history of poetry, however, might go a long way in research, chronicle, and discussion of a vital body of ancient and modern poems under the following (and more) heads: —

1. Chants.
2. Psalms.
3. Gnomics.
4. Contemplations.
5. Proverbs.
6. Epitaphs.
7. Litanies.
8. Incidents of intensely concentrated action or utterance.

Under each of the above heads could be gathered a multitude of instances. There are "strict formalists in soup-and-fish" who would deny such instances being valid poetry. They can be confronted with a superb and passionate verse from the mouth of Oliver Cromwell: "My brethren, by the bowels of Christ I beseech you, bethink you that you may be mistaken." (Do we have here the cadenced utterance of passion?) Or we could cite the Union General in April of 1864, bemoaning blunders and corruption, "May God save my country — if there is a God — and if I have a country." Or a Michelangelo saying in 1509, "I have no friends of any kind and I do not want any," and forty years later writing, "I am always alone and I speak to no one."

We could add the Irish toast: "May the road to hell grow green waiting for you." We could copy from Olive Schreiner's diary: "I have such a longing for friendship, someone to talk to really. I wonder if it is all a delusion. Even any kind of love I want. Death is so near and I have loved so little." We could offer an epitaph from the novel *Remembrance Rock:* —

> He was a practical man
> who lived dreamless.
> Now he sleeps here
> as he lived — dreamless.

Or we could draw from Justice Holmes: "I have always sought to guide the future — but it is very lonely sometimes trying to play God."

No two persons register precisely the same to a work of art. Mark Twain tells, as one version has it, of two men who for the first time laid eyes on the tumultuous and majestic Grand Canyon of Arizona. One cried out, "I'll be God damned!" The other fell to his knees in prayer. Mark contended their religious feelings were the same though the ritual was different.

Of Turner's painting, *The Slave Ship*, Ruskin wrote it was "perfect and immortal." The painter Inness declared, "It's claptrap." Thackeray was puzzled and neutral: "I don't know whether it's sublime or ridiculous."

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Lincoln rated the Declaration of Independence an "immortal emblem," though Rufus Choate earlier held it to be a string of "glittering generalities." Choate it was who listened to Italian grand opera, hearing the words but not knowing what they were saying, and asking his daughter, "Interpret for me the libretto lest I dilate with the wrong emotion."

What is instinct? What is thought? Where is the absolute line between these two? Nobody knows — as yet. What is an Emotion as apart from an Idea? When are a Concept and a Feeling identical? Nobody knows — exactly — as yet. What is an ideational state of mind as set off from a reverie? When do the foregoing seemingly contrasted urges of blood and brain move into a confluence with an end result of Creative Art? They're working on it. If or when they filch this secret from the broad bosom of Mother Nature they will have solved the mystery of what for long has been termed Genius.

What is this borderland of dream and logic, of fantasy and reason, where the roots and tentacles of mind and personality float and drift into the sudden shaping of a flash resulting in a scheme, a form, a design, an invention, a machine, an image, a song, a symphony, a drama, a poem? There are those who believe they know — and those who hope they may yet know.

As years pass and experience writes new records in our mind life, we go back to some works of art we rejected in the early days and find values we missed. Work, love, laughter, pain, death, put impressions on us as time passes, and we brood over what has happened, praying it may be an "exalted brooding." Out of songs and scars and the mystery of personal development, we may get eyes that pick out intentions we had not seen before in people, in art, in books and poetry.

Naturally, too, the reverse happens. What we find full of fine nourishment at one time, we may find later has lost interest for us. A few masterpieces last across the years. We usually discard some. A few masterpieces are enough. Why this is so we do not know. For each individual his new acquisitions and old discards are different.

Perhaps no wrong is done and no temple of human justice violated in pointing out that each authentic poet makes a style of his own. Sometimes this style is so clearly the poet's own that when he is imitated it is known who is imitated. Shakespeare, Villon, Li Po, Whitman — each sent forth his language and impress of thought and feeling from a different style of gargoyle spout. In the spacious highways of books major or minor, each poet is allowed the stride that will get him where he wants to go if, God help him, he can hit that stride and keep it.

At the age of six, as my fingers first found how to shape the alphabet, I decided to become a person of letters. At the age of ten I had scrawled letters on slates, on paper, on boxes and walls, and I formed an ambition to become a sign-painter. At twenty I was an American soldier in Puerto Rico writing letters printed in the hometown paper. At twenty-one I went to West Point, being a classmate of Douglas MacArthur and Ulysses S. Grant III — for two weeks — returning home after passing in spelling, geography, history, failing in arithmetic and grammar. At twenty-three I edited a college paper and wrote many a paragraph that after a lapse of fifty years still seems funny, the same applying to the college yearbook I edited the following year. Across several years I wrote many odd pieces — two slim books — not worth later reprint. In a six-year period came four books of poetry having a variety of faults, no other person more keenly aware of their accomplishments and shortcomings than myself. In the two books for children, in this period, are a few cornland tales that go on traveling, one about "The Two Skyscrapers Who Decided to Have a Child."

At fifty I had published a two-volume biography and *The American Songbag*, and there was puzzlement as to whether I was a poet, a biographer, a wandering troubadour with a guitar, a Midwest Hans Christian Andersen, or a historian of current events whose newspaper reporting was gathered into a book, *The Chicago Race Riots*. At fifty-one I wrote America's first biography of a photographer.

At sixty-one came a four-volume biography, bringing doctoral degrees at Harvard, Yale, New York University, Wesleyan, Lafayette, Lincoln Memorial, Syracuse, Rollins, Dartmouth, Augustana, and Upsala. I am still studying verbs and the mystery of how they connect nouns. I am more suspicious of adjectives than at any other time in all my born days. I have forgotten the meaning of twenty or thirty of my poems written thirty or forty years ago. I still favor several simple poems published long ago which continue to have an appeal for simple people. I have written by different methods and in a wide miscellany of moods and have seldom been afraid to travel in lands and seas where I met fresh scenes and new songs. All my life I have been trying to learn to read, to see and hear, and to write.

At sixty-five I began my first novel, and the five years lacking a month I took to finish it, I was still traveling, still a seeker. I should like to think that as I go on writing there will be sentences truly alive, with verbs quivering, with nouns giving color and echoes. It could be, in the grace of God, I shall live to be eighty-nine, as did Hokusai, and speaking my farewell to earthly scenes, I might paraphrase: "If God had let me live five years longer I should have been a writer."

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Reinsurance

JAMES STEWART MARTIN *is a Washington lawyer who at the outbreak of World War II was asked to help organize an Economic Warfare Section in the Department of Justice. From 1942 to 1945, he served as Special Assistant to the Attorney General. In February, 1945, he was transferred to Germany to head up the investigations which it was hoped would put an end to the cartel system; under General Clay he was made head of the Decartelization Branch and Control Officer for I. G. Farbenindustrie. Here it was that he gathered conclusive material for his book* All Honorable Men, *which Little, Brown will publish and of which this article is a part.*

HOW THE GERMANS SPOTTED OUR SHIPS

by JAMES STEWART MARTIN

1

An economic war is an attack against the economy of a country. The idea is to throw the country's productive system out of balance and introduce other maladjustments that place it at a disadvantage in meeting a future military crisis.

When World War II broke out we found that this country had been the victim of a relentless economic war, begun by the military and political planners of Germany long before there was any question of a shooting war. In that case the German planners had used German business firms and a chain of international business agreements to delay the production of critical materials in this country. But that is not necessarily the only way in which an enemy might gain the advantage over us on the economic side of an international power struggle. The United States is particularly vulnerable to an attack through economic channels because an enemy can always count on American firms to put up a stiff fight for "business as usual." In that way, American business itself can be led wittingly or unwittingly to take an active part in rounding out the enemy strategy.

We had a dramatic illustration of this point early in the last war. We set up an Economic Warfare Section in the Department of Justice to trace the threads of Germany's economic penetration and to help American agencies turn the economic war the other way around.

The case began as an antitrust complaint. Ernest Cuneo brought in a client who was engaged in the fire and marine insurance business. This client claimed to be the victim of restrictive practices. In discussing his complaint with Joseph Borkin of the Antitrust Division in the summer of 1941, he charged that besides violating the antitrust laws in various ways, the regular course of business of the big companies had the amazing effect of supplying Germany with a full espionage service.

In 1940 and 1941 ships leaving American seaports were protected by security measures designed to keep their departure secret. Yet in case after case, he charged, every man on board had been marked before the captain opened his orders. The routine system of placing insurance had put precise information on their sailing date and destination in the hands of the Germans before the ship left port.

Insurers of large risks, such as ships, cargoes, and industrial plants, customarily spread the risk among other companies willing to take fractional shares. The big insurance and reinsurance companies in the United States which handle the largest risks have such treaties on an international basis, through arrangements with the Lloyd's group in England, or with the Zurich group in Switzerland.

It had long been the custom of the American companies to place the reinsurance on ships and cargoes with the Zurich group by sending a radiogram containing the necessary information so that Zurich could accept responsibility for a share of the American insurer's risk. The radioed information would include the name of the ship, the sailing date, the cargo carried, the destination, and the value of the insured property. One detail that should have raised someone's eyebrow, but did not until the government stepped in, was the fact that the Zurich group in turn had a reinsurance treaty with the Munich reinsurance pool in Germany. The result was that during 1940 and early 1941, by the time a ship had cleared New York or Baltimore harbor headed for a European port, the German intelligence service already had the sailing data in hand.

Borkin turned the case over to several antitrust lawyers who called a conference of executives from the five or six big companies which were doing international reinsurance business. The company representatives agreed to stop sending shipping information by radio and there the matter rested. Apparently the government lawyers assumed that once the companies had their attention called to the

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inherent danger they would take all other necessary steps to avoid violations of the Espionage Act. None of the men detailed to handle the case, either for the government or for the companies, appeared to realize what an efficient pipeline the Germans had set up.

2

In the spring of 1942, Cuneo's client came back and reported that the problem was far from solved. The lawyers to whom the case had been assigned had not carried through. This time Borkin turned to the Economic Warfare Section, of which I was then chief, and we worked together to try to get the matter settled. We found that reinsurance information sheets, or *bordereaux*, were still going to Switzerland by mail. We also discovered that the reinsurance business, far from being confined to ships and cargoes, also covered industrial plants, and especially those large new plants built for war production, the ones with security guards at the gates to see that no unauthorized eyes got inside.

In the case of industrial plants, we found that the reinsurance *bordereaux* did not account for the full extent of the leakage. The usual reinsurance treaty on such risks provides that the reinsurance group has the right to demand copies of a full report by the insurance inspector. This includes blueprints of the installation, description of the fire hazards and risks, and inventory of the contents of the buildings, room by room. We found that, before 1938, the Zurich group had asked for the full insurance inspector's report in only 5 or 6 per cent of the cases. After 1938, the full report was requested with increasing frequency, until the percentage was close to 90.

It had seemed obvious to us that the government ought to stop this transmission of shipping and industrial information through Switzerland to the Reich. Unlike the United States, the German government as early as 1936 had closed off such information about Germany. As soon as the Germans occupied France, Belgium, and Holland in 1940 they put a stop to all such transmissions from those countries. We proposed to have the Attorney General send a letter to each company warning that transmission of marine and industrial plant information of this type came within the scope of the Espionage Act. The letter we drafted said that the Espionage Act

> . . . makes it illegal to receive or to aid another to receive information connected with the national defense with reason to believe that it is to be used to the injury of the United States or to the advantage of a foreign nation.
>
> Under present conditions, information relating to cargoes, hulls, plants, supplies, equipment and the like, as well as to persons engaged in the war effort, can not be sent abroad in connection with insurance contracts without reason to believe that this information may be used to the injury of the United States or the advantage of a foreign nation. The dangers inherent in the transmission of this information are present even though such information may be destined only for neutral countries or those allied with us.

In spite of the simplicity and directness of this proposal, however, we ran into difficulties. Issuance of such a letter in the name of the Attorney General required approval by the Solicitor General, Charles Fahy. Mr. Fahy would not take this responsibility without consulting the other interested departments of the government.

At first, no one could believe that Americans were handing the German intelligence service information on a silver platter. At one of Mr. Fahy's interdepartmental meetings, Joe Borkin slapped down on the table a stack of insurance inspectors' reports on various prominent buildings. He had purchased these from sources open to anyone in the insurance business without any special "security" clearance. For fifty-five cents he had the plans of the White House, showing the location of fire extinguishers and other protective apparatus. For seventy-five cents he had the plans of a large new magnesium plant. One of the blueprints had an arrow pointing at a valve, with the legend: "Under no circumstances must this valve be closed while the plant is in operation, as an explosion would result."

To complete our case, we had obtained from the Office of Censorship copies of insurance *bordereaux* photographed from the current week's mail destined for Switzerland.

We got other evidence to show that German insurance companies were operating at a loss in Latin America, with the help of a German government subsidy, to capture a larger share of the international reinsurance business. At the same time, to show how informative inspection reports could be to an outsider, another of our men got from the files of American reinsurance firms similar data on important European plants, such as the N. V. Philips lamp and radio-tube factories at Eindhoven, Holland. Months later, the British Ministry of Economic Warfare thanked us profusely for copies of this report. They told us it had been used in planning the RAF raid on Eindhoven in December, 1942, and in assessing the bomb damage after the raid.

Still there were objections. Maritime Commission representatives argued that existing regulations required them to place insurance on all cargoes. If we put any brakes on the insurance companies, they might decline to accept the risks, and ship sailings would be delayed. Besides, enemy agents could get information on ship sailings and cargoes by going down to the docks and watching the ships load and depart.

The FBI resented the implication that enemy

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agents had the run of the waterfront. Nearly everyone agreed there was no sense in wrapping up marine and industrial information and handing it to the Germans. But the Maritime Commission was still worried about the possibility of not getting insurance placed before ships were ready to sail. Other agencies were bothered about industrial plant insurance. For months they urged us to look for a solution that would permit the insurance business to be carried on as usual. Why not set up an interdepartmental committee of qualified economists and experts to sit in consultation with members of the insurance industry? They could pass upon specific items of information, deciding in each case whether the release of the information would substantially harm the war effort or give help to the enemy.

We stuck to our guns and insisted that the simplest thing to do was to tell the insurance companies that this particular practice had to stop. Let the people in the business, who were already familiar with conditions in their industry, figure out how they could adjust themselves to the new circumstances. We felt that government, wherever possible, should operate through laws, not by setting up more and more administrative tribunals to command or forbid particular acts. We pointed out that the Lloyd's group had solved a similar problem by sending over from England a resident representative with power of attorney to make commitments on behalf of the British companies without sending information out of the United States.

Our stand for a government of laws, not men, got no support from the Solicitor General. Mr. Fahy overruled us again, and discussions continued on how to set up an interdepartmental screening committee. After several months of this, even men from the insurance business began to ask the Attorney General to send his letter so that they could get the bureaucrats out of their hair. The letter was finally sent out on January 7, 1943, nearly a year and a half after the leakage had first been brought to the attention of an agency of the government, and over nine months after the Economic Warfare Section had taken up the case and pointed out what uses the Germans could be making of the information.

Actually the Germans made plenty of use of it. Nearly three years later, in the summer of 1945, in the files of the Munich Reinsurance Company and the German intelligence service, we were to find bundles of photographs, blueprints, and detailed descriptions of whole industrial developments in the United States, many of them obtained through insurance channels. Together they made up the vital statistics of our war economy.

Nothing was ever done to restrict the circulation of insurance inspectors' reports within the industry inside the United States. A few weeks after Joe Borkin made his dramatic purchases, an FBI agent appeared at Borkin's office in the Justice building and demanded to know why Joe, who is not in the insurance business, had been buying up this type of information. The FBI, with its attention focused on security of information about war plants, had seen nothing unusual until someone outside the insurance field showed an interest in information that was freely accessible to anyone in the business. Like the characters in the Chesterton story who failed to suspect the mailman, even the G-men had a blind spot for "security leaks" that occur in what is regarded as the normal course of business.

THE WINE-DARK SEA, CAPE SUNIUM

by JOHN ACKERSON

The corn ships scurried past, for Athens town
Of famished mouths; the garrison stared down,
True soldiers, smiled a most superior frown.

For hulls are frail things, seamen frailer still,
While timeless were the walls that scarped their hill.
And heavy spear-butts grounded with a will!

Today the bluff bows toss up plumes of foam
While broken columns strew the headland's dome
In wind still following the coasters home.

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As the wife of the Governor of New Hampshire, who was later to serve three terms in the United States Senate, FRANCES PARKINSON KEYES *came to her writing despite the claims of a busy life and the increasing handicap of ill health. "Satisfied Reflections of a Semi-Bostonian," which was published in the December, 1918, issue of the* Atlantic, *was the first of her articles to appear in a national magazine. In the years that followed, she slowly, painfully established herself as a novelist with an enormous following (her latest three novels have sold more than a million and a half copies), and now here is the inside story of what her best-sellers cost.* Joy Street, *her new book which is to be published this autumn, will be about Boston, the town in which she grew up and with which she has never lost touch, though recently she has spent her winters in Louisiana.*

THE COST OF A BEST-SELLER

by FRANCES PARKINSON KEYES

1

EVER since I can remember I have wanted to be a writer. But when I married, at an early age, I found that my husband was no more disposed to regard my literary efforts with a favorable eye than my mother had been when she first read my youthful verses. I was used to writing in secret, however, and I went on doing so. A New England attic provides an excellent retreat from prying eyes, and there are always a few minutes every day when the children are asleep and when no household task requires immediate attention — or at least it was so in my case. But I had grown extremely sensitive on the subject of my writing: if neither my mother nor my husband believed in it, how could I reasonably expect that anyone else would do so? The conviction that I could not became so strong that I doubt if the ruled copy books, filled with penciled scribblings, of which there were eventually quite a number, would ever have seen the light of day if the family fortunes had not been at such low ebb.

I was ill a great deal, I had three young children, and I did not see how I could dispense altogether with domestic service; I had never been trained to a profession or indeed to anything useful; but I was eager and determined to help my husband in some way if I possibly could. Desperately, because I could think of nothing else to do, I drew one of the ruled copy books from its hiding place; on a battered typewriter in the attic I ineptly copied one of my penciled stories. When it was finished, I awaited my next trip to Boston and myself carried the typescript to a publisher. He received me mercifully and promised that if the script were not acceptable, he would respect my request that it should be returned to me in care of a sympathetic friend and not to my home address.

The script was not returned and, though the novel based upon it received neither a startling sale nor rave reviews, it furnished the wherewithal to pay all outstanding doctors' bills and to provide me with a new spring outfit, the first I had had in a long while. It did far more. It restored my faith in myself as a human being — and as a writer.

I did not get rapid results but I no longer hid as I wrote. Each novel sold more copies than its predecessor, though that was not saying much. Articles, for a long time, did better; therefore, though I had started out as a novelist and hoped that I could some day return to the field of fiction, I spent most of my time and strength on articles; they brought in more money than fiction did, and my contribution to the family budget was of prime importance. *Good Housekeeping* and *Delineator* were two of the magazines which sent me into many parts of the world, and my articles for them met with a very generous response.

Eventually I was asked to write the biography of St. Theresa of Lisieux and, with many misgivings, I undertook this. While working on it, at the Abbaye des Bénédictines, I was able to write, for the first time, in an atmosphere of great peace, among surroundings of complete tranquillity. This quietude was like a healing pool and, in due course, it became a wellspring of inspiration. The following fall, seventeen years after the appearance of my first novel, I produced my first best-seller.

When the limp yellow letter announcing the acceptance of my first novel came in, I sat for a long while with it in my hands, reading and re-

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reading it; and as I did so I made a vow: that I would never let any work leave my hands until it was as good as I knew how to make it — not as good as I hoped it might be some day, not as good as another writer could turn out, but the very best of which I was capable at the moment. I promised myself that no matter how much I needed money, I would not write hastily or casually; that I would do my utmost to improve my craftsmanship; that I would give every subject on which I wrote careful thought and careful study; and that I would begin and end every working day with prayer. I knew from the beginning that writing is not just a trade, but a trust, and that an author who is unworthy of such a trust is betraying it, in the same sense as a physician who breaks the Hippocratic Oath.

To the best of my ability, I had kept my vow and been faithful to my creed over that long stretch of years between the appearance of my first novel and that of my first best-seller. But the physical strain had been very great. I had never failed to fulfill an assignment, but I had six times gone aboard ship on a stretcher because I was too ill or too crippled to do so otherwise. I had fainted away, from exhaustion or pain, at more than one press table. A bad fall, occurring early in the course of a trip around the world, resulted — largely through the unavailability of proper diagnosis and care for more than a year — in a spinal ailment so serious that I was condemned to wear a steel harness for the rest of my life. I had been through numerous hurricanes and earthquakes, two or three epidemics, and several revolutions.

My first novel to appear on a best-seller list did not mount very high or remain there very long. But, as I gazed at its title, coupled with my name, on that fascinating chart, I told myself triumphantly that my troubles as a writer were over — well, very nearly over. Of course the next novel would do better still, and the next one better than that, and so on. Presently I would be earning enough money so that I would not have to work unless I felt equal to it, physically and mentally, or under any other conditions which were not pleasing to me. It had taken me seventeen years to reach the point where I could say this, but that point had now been attained. I said it and I meant it. I thought I was justified in doing so.

I could not possibly have been more mistaken. I still had to learn that Ernie Pyle was right when he said, "There is no easy way to do your work. . . . However it may seem to you, writing is an exhausting and tearing thing."

2

My first mistake was in visualizing the financial returns from a best-seller in terms of advance royalties which would mount in size with each successive book, if its predecessor had done well, and of sales which would become correspondingly greater. I realized, of course, in a general way, that the more money I had, the more Uncle Sam would exact from me in taxes — and this irrespective of the fact that it was earned and not inherited money, and of the further fact that my tardy arrival in the high-income bracket meant that nearly twenty years of my adult life had gone into learning my craft and that this period of novitiate represented investment but no profit. What I did not realize was that, in order to get the large advance royalties and the vastly increased sales, I would have to spend a corresponding amount of money myself!

I could give a great many examples of this, but I think one or two will suffice: my novel entitled *The River Road* brought me in a good deal of money — on paper; but in order to make it authentic and convincing, I myself had to go and live on the special stretch of River Road near Baton Rouge which I was attempting to interpret. I have long made it a practice to settle in any region that I use for a setting. On this occasion, however, there were difficulties. The only available house was one of great beauty and historical significance; but it had not been occupied for many years and it was in a sad state of disrepair. Moreover, it had never been equipped with many modern conveniences — not even a kitchen sink. Its owners agreed to lease it to me if I would put it in good condition, and I accepted their terms because there was literally nothing else I could do if I were to write the book for which I was under contract.

By the time I had equipped this twenty-room house — inexplicably called The Cottage! — with the minimum amount of plumbing requisite for decent living, with enough gas heaters to ensure a reasonable amount of warmth and enough lighting fixtures to read and write by, I had spent really staggering sums, and these represented only the beginning of my outlay. The house had to be painted throughout and screened throughout; it had to have clothes closets, pantry shelves, and a linoleum-covered board floor in the kitchen (there had been only a rough brick pavement before). And none of these essentials was easy to come by. Daily, as I besought the services of a workman or went shopping for a roll of wire, I was asked if I did not know there was a war on. When I look back on the months that I spent in making that house habitable — months, needless to say, when I accomplished very little writing — they seem to me among the most trying I have ever spent in connection with my work.

When I was finally settled in The Cottage there were further complications. I had neither mail nor telephone service; anyone who has ever tried to conduct a big business without them — and by then my writing constituted a big business — will have some idea what this meant. I had no delivery of any commodity; every morsel of food eaten in

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that house, every drop of water drunk, was brought out from town, eight miles away. My secretary brought food, water, and ice out with her in the morning and took a list away with her when she left at night; but if anything was forgotten in the way of provender, we went without; if there was unexpected company, portions were smaller. After my secretary had left in the evening, my housekeeper, Clara Wilson, and I were entirely shut off from the world, unless we had guests. The spinal difficulty to which I have previously referred has always prevented me from driving a car; if either Clara or I had been ill in the night there would have been nothing to do about it; we had no way of calling a doctor or sending anybody to fetch one. Neither could we have summoned help if there had been a robbery or a fire. I am not a timid soul, but I could not help thinking of all these things when I had a sudden, inexplicable pain or when mysterious noises sounded through the gloom.

3

The book which I had agreed to write required a great deal of research and a great deal of expert advice. Its story concerned the rising and falling fortunes, over a twenty-five-year period, of a family living on a sugar plantation located beside the Mississippi River. When I started the novel, I knew next to nothing about the cultivation of sugar. I visited more than a score of sugar mills, read more than forty books, and consulted well over a hundred persons before I was sure of my background material. This had to be drafted with meticulous care, after consultation with competent authorities, and then read back to these persons, to be certain it contained no factual mistakes. Afterwards it had to be redrafted, in more finished form.

The flood conditions to which the region is subject constituted another unfamiliar angle; so did the various types of hunting and other sports prevalent in the locality; a corresponding amount of time and care went into the interpretation of these. Numerous colloquialisms and dialects are indigenous to the vicinity; a failure to reproduce these correctly would have lessened the illusion of reality in the book. Whenever I talked with a new acquaintance, either white or black, I listened carefully for peculiarities of speech and, as soon as I was alone, I jotted these down. After I had incorporated them in my text, I consulted a local authority as to whether I had done so accurately and effectively.

When I had been working on the book about six months I was taken ill, and my physician advised me to limit myself to three working hours a day. I was already far behind my schedule, because of many unavoidable delays, and this lateness represented a serious loss, not only to myself but to my publisher. A publisher maps out his program long before a book's appearance: salesmen are sent all over the country to take advance orders for it; an advertising campaign is inaugurated; if there is a paper shortage — as there was throughout the war — available amounts are carefully allocated. If a publisher has counted on a book for fall publication and then fails to receive it, he stands to lose thousands of dollars. No conscientious author will allow his publisher to undergo such a loss, if he can possibly help it; still less will he involve the firm in losses for two successive seasons.

When my physician told me to curtail my writing hours, I replied that I simply could not do it. He shrugged his shoulders and said that under those circumstances he would not be responsible for the consequences.

The months dragged along. I was terribly troubled about having failed my publisher and terribly worried about my own finances. I had not counted on being without supplementary funds for so long, or on the expenses of maintaining such a costly establishment as The Cottage indefinitely. I borrowed money on all my securities and, realizing I could not borrow more, every morning I forced myself to get out of my bed and go to my desk. Some days the words began to come almost of themselves, and by night I had covered from fifteen to thirty pages in my copy book; other days I managed to cover only a few. But in either case, I stayed at my desk all day, eating my lunch on a tray which was brought to me there. In the evening, I tumbled into bed, telling myself that I simply could not go on like this, that I would have to give up the struggle. But the next day I was back at my desk. There was no other way to meet my obligations.

My birthday occurs in midsummer and for a great many years, whenever I have been at home, I have celebrated it with the same circle of old friends. We had planned an especially festive celebration for that year to mark a significant decade. But when my birthday came, I was thousands of miles from my old friends and the date meant nothing to my new ones. I spent the day alone, and though I wrote, I did so lying on the sofa, because by that time I was too ill to sit at a desk. I was inexpressibly lonely, and when darkness finally fell, my yearning for my own hearthstone and my own people became so acute that the pain of it was almost unbearable.

A still sharper disappointment awaited me: one of my sons, a lieutenant in the Navy, had written me of his happy engagement to a lieutenant in the Army Medical Corps. At that time he was in England and she was attached to a hospital in France. They were to be married as soon as either one had leave. Because my next novel was to be done abroad, I had been able to secure a passport and naturally I had hoped to attend the wedding ceremony. But when it was celebrated, at St. James's Church, on Spanish Place, in London, I

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was still at The Cottage, going from my bed to my sofa and back to bed again and working twelve hours a day on *The River Road*.

The novel was finally finished in September of '45. I did not attempt to pack anything except my clothes. I took a train for New York, intent on sailing for Europe the following week. I had missed my son's wedding, but I was still determined to find out what had happened to my friends in devastated France and I was still bent on writing a book with its scene there. However, for the first time in my career as a writer, the ship on which I had taken passage sailed without me; after I was released from the long-continued strain of working I collapsed completely.

Three weeks went by before I recovered sufficiently to continue my journey and go home. Most of the autumn was spent in bed and it was not until after the New Year that I could sit at a desk again. I did not get to France until the following spring.

In the meanwhile *The River Road* appeared and almost immediately leapt up close to the top of the best-seller list. I studied the chart, but it had lost its onetime magic; I told my publisher that even if the new novel sold a million copies, it would have cost me more than it was worth — in cash and in kind. He laughed and said I would feel differently when it *had* sold a million copies. But I did not. I finally convinced him I never should.

4

That authors work only when they are "inspired" to do so and that inspiration comes as suddenly and as easily as manna from heaven is a belief so general as to be almost universal. Repeatedly I am called upon to explain that books by any established author are written under contract, and that a failure to live up to such a contract involves both an author and his publisher in a serious financial loss. "Then what do you do when you don't feel like writing?" is the question which generally follows. When I answer brutally that I go on writing anyway; that, as a matter of fact, I seldom feel like doing it, but, on the other hand, I do like to eat good food and live in a comfortable house and wear nice clothes, my tormentor looks at me incredulously. "Why, I always supposed that writing was one of your little *diversions!*" a lady recently told me, almost reproachfully. "You don't mean to say you depend on your writing for *money!*" she added.

But after all, the questions that are asked a writer in person are only a small percentage of the total number he is called upon to answer. Every mail brings in a flood of them. For instance, I find that one correspondent is consulting me on a matter of etiquette: should she write a thank-you note for a shower gift? Another correspondent would like to have a temporary home with a "genteel family" in New Orleans, where the total charges for both room and board would not come to more than eight dollars a week. This one I refer, in desperation, to the Chamber of Commerce. "What do you consider your most successful menu?" asks a third. "Do you prefer New England cookery to Southern cookery, or vice versa? Why?"

A request for a recipe which I actually took pleasure in answering came from Uganda, East Africa. "We have been reading about mint juleps in *Honor Eright* and *Also the Hills*," wrote my correspondent, "and we think they would taste very good in this climate. Would you be willing to tell us how they are made?" I sent her careful instructions and, in due course, received a grateful acknowledgment; the mint juleps made in Uganda by my recipe had more than come up to expectations. Shortly thereafter I received a similar request from the Transvaal: "We have heard that you have told some of your readers in Uganda how you make mint juleps and we would like to know too." Again I wrote out careful instructions and again I received a grateful acknowledgment. Whatever the shortcomings of my novels, they have helped to slake thirst on the Dark Continent!

Requests for biographical material are even more urgent. With all the good will in the world, it is impossible to give such communications the immediate and detailed attention expected; yet they are supplemented by others which are still harder to answer. These come from embryonic authors, who ask for help and advice and often enclose scripts which they would like to have read, edited, and submitted to a publisher.

I take special pains to answer all these letters, because I have not forgotten that, when I was a beginner myself, there was no one to whom I could appeal; I vowed at the time that if I were ever in a position to help another novice who was in the same state of bewilderment and discouragement, I would not turn a deaf ear. But most of the would-be authors who appeal to me are hard to help. Either they have not that little God-given spark we call talent, without which no amount of work will do any good; or else they have it and are not willing to work, and without work, the talent is no use either; it might just as well be folded away in a napkin, like the one we read about in the Bible.

Of course, not all letters contain questions and petitions; some merely contain comments; and though the great majority of these comments are pleasant, others are extremely disagreeable. An unjustly critical or abusive letter, received when its recipient is exhausted, discouraged, or battling against illness and trouble, can do a great deal of real harm by increasing a writer's depression. For instance, whenever I receive a letter taking issue with me as a Catholic, I wonder why I have failed in my sincere endeavors to live up to my religion, and worry because I am not more of a credit to my chosen church.

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Reviewers, no less than correspondents, can have an extremely depressing effect on a conscientious author. I have long since accepted the fact that I shall never win critical acclaim, though of course I should have liked to be worthy of it, since it was originally my hope to be regarded as a woman of letters as well as a best-selling author. But I have resigned myself, more or less philosophically, to the latter role.

Adverse reviews, however disappointing and damaging to one's pride, can also be philosophically accepted if and when they are, in some measure, fair and, to some degree, based on fact; it is when they are unjust and inaccurate that they hurt. "The complete disregard for good literary form in this book is lamentable," writes a Nashville reviewer. "But then Mrs. Keyes has never cared whether she wrote good English." Never *cared!* There has been nothing about which I cared more, nothing I have tried harder to do. Apparently, I have failed, even though some of my books are now required reading at certain colleges. I must try harder, I will indeed. But to say I do not care! . . . "The fine old restaurant will doubtless survive the insult offered it," scathingly writes a New Orleans reviewer. The *insult?* I thought I was paying it a compliment when I used its name. The proprietor thought so too, or at least he assured me he did, not once but many times; otherwise of course I would not have done it. "Mrs. Keyes has forsaken her usual field of historical fiction, which is rather a pity; she does better with her costume novels." This comment, which comes both from my native state of Virginia and my favorite New York paper, seems, in a way, the unkindest cut of all, for I have never written a costume novel! It is all too evident that the reviewer has been misled by the title, *Came a Cavalier*, and that he has not looked inside the covers of that or any other book of mine. If I am fated to be condemned by an authority who will not even take the trouble to see whether I deserve his low opinion, then this is an aspect of authorship which I find it hard to accept with good grace.

5

I STILL use a pencil and the same kind of ruled copy book that I did when I was a child, scribbling on the right-hand page and keeping the left-hand page free for corrections and interpolations. It is a slow way to work, but it has many advantages, as far as I am concerned, besides the obvious one that I am accustomed to it. At one stage of my progress, as I have said, I did my own typing, copying from my penciled draft and revising as I went along; I had to give up this method because I was too lame to sit at a typewriter, and I would not go back to it if I could.

I have found that, by reading aloud from my penciled script, I can catch the tedious repetition of words, phrases, and ideas as I never could in any other way. The conversation that drags, the character that fails to develop, the situation which is forced or strained — these are all mercilessly revealed. And Deanie, my stoical young secretary, to whom every word, every punctuation mark even, is read, does not spare her comments. If it is a true saying that no man is a hero to his valet, it is an even truer one that no author is an object of awe to his secretary, and fortunately so, for her carping criticism may save him from many a blunder. "You said yesterday that man had blue eyes," Deanie tells me caustically. "Now you have made them brown. Which do you really want?" . . . "Nobody says Wop around here; they say Dago, so I am putting in Dago." . . . "Well, maybe you like that girl, the way you describe her, but I think she's a whited sepulcher, myself."

Hour after hour, day after day, this work of drafting, reading aloud, redrafting and redictating goes on. I write to my eldest son hurried business letters, because he is also my lawyer; but weeks, even months go by when I do not write to his brothers, who are equally dear to me. Such letters would be merely personal, and I have no time for personal letters. There is that deadline. I receive a gracious invitation to spend a week-end in the country; I tell Deanie to decline it for me, with regrets. And the regrets are very real. The azaleas are at the height of their bloom just now, it would be very beautiful in the country; and there would be turtle soup and chicken parlow and spoon bread for dinner; there would be great good fellowship and I would come back to my work relaxed and refreshed. But there is that deadline. There are no Saturday afternoons off for either Deanie or myself — no Sunday afternoons, either, for me. Sundays are the days when I must forge forward with the pencil script for, with everyone else bent on relaxation or enjoyment, I can be surer then of freedom from interruption than at any other time. So, after we come back from Mass, Deanie disappears and I go back to my study in the slave quarters. And long afterwards, Clara calls to me from the back gallery, "I know you don't want to be interrupted, but have you any idea what time it is?"

I have no idea what time it is in New Orleans, for I have been in another world. I have begun to live with a group of people whom I never knew before, but whom I am, at last, getting to know very well. I have to. If they were not real to me, they would never be real to anyone else. I only hope they will not make me too much trouble, that they will behave as it is reasonable for them to behave and as I want them to behave. But I cannot be sure of it. The first thing I know, Anne will be refusing to marry John, and Edward will fall down and break his leg, and Aunt Nellie will leave her money, which Mary needs so desperately, to an orphan asylum. Well, I should not complain, if

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only I do not have to deal with another cat like Pinkham.

I shall never forget Pinkham, who complicated my existence in such an unexpected way and to such a very great degree when I was writing *Also the Hills*. The house on Farman Hill, which provided the setting for the major part of that story, had its prototype in reality, like most of the houses I have used for settings; and my friends Daniel and Sadie Carr, the owners of the real house, were most kind about helping me with my local color. When the book was about two-thirds done, I realized that I had said nothing about any birds on Farman Hill, and I was sure there must be some; so I wrote to Mrs. Carr, asking for authentic information. By return mail, she sent me a long, detailed letter, which ended, ". . . and I think the reason we have always been fortunate in having so many birds about the place is because our cat, Pinkham, has never molested them. He does not take the least interest in birds."

Forgetting all about the rest of the letter, I sat staring in horror at those last sentences. Of course a house like Farman Hill would have had a cat like Pinkham in it. And there was no cat in my story. I tried to tell myself that no one else would notice the omission, that even Mrs. Carr herself had not suggested the addition of Pinkham to the cast of characters. But my arguments were unconvincing to me. Finally I went to bed, and every time I turned over, facing the fireplace, I seemed to see the eyes of a reproachful cat glaring at me from the spot where the andirons customarily stood. At four o'clock in the morning I could bear it no longer. I got up, flung on my clothes, and went to my desk. Then I took the script of *Also the Hills* from its box and, beginning with Chapter One, introduced Pinkham in all the places where I knew he belonged!

After that, I was at peace again. But such interpolations entail very considerable revision when the script in question has already reached its third and presumably its final stage, as it had in that case. The second stage — the result of reading aloud from the penciled draft — is represented by a typescript done in triple spacing, which allows for further revisions, corrections, and additions. There are usually a good many of these — so many that numerous pages are typed over and over again, still in triple space. But when we get around to double spacing, we think our script is ready to send off to our publisher, who, long before this, has been hounding us for it through the expressive media of air mail, telegrams, and long-distance calls. The appearance of another character at this point would mean that the third draft would also have to be done over. What is more, it would mean that something would have to be done to placate both Deanie and the publisher.

Reflecting on all this, I call to Miss Clara that I will be up in a minute. But I do not go up in a minute. I read through what I have written that afternoon and it seems to me very, very bad. I know it will seem even worse the next day, when I read it aloud to Deanie; she will question my spelling and correct my slang and tell me that my hero's type of love-making went out with hoop skirts. Well, it can't be helped. And I have an uneasy feeling about our pawnbroker. I do not know very much about pawnbrokers. It is too bad that I did not stick to politicians. I am more familiar with their habits than those of pawnbrokers.

The pawnbroker does not represent my only source of worry: I had better get out that folder where I file away names. There are several Leonardos in my fiction already; someone will be writing in to remind me of this, and anyway, I am disappointed with the repetition myself. Leopoldo is almost the same. Emilio sounds effeminate. Alphonso is a cliché. Wait a minute — what about Ambrosio? Yes, I think Ambrosio might do. I will write it in everywhere that I have previously written Leonardo, because otherwise I will forget to make the revision some place and confusion will result. Then, tomorrow morning, when I start reading aloud to Deanie, I will see how Ambrosio sounds.

I put out the lights and close the door of the study. It is very quiet in the patio, so quiet that it is hard to believe that this is in the heart of a great city. The fountain makes a little trickling sound and the breeze stirs the camellia bushes, ever so slightly. There are stars overhead and the air is soft and mild. It would be pleasant to sit in the patio for a little while. But it must be very late by now, and suddenly I know that I am terribly tired, so tired that I would rather go to bed than sit anywhere, so tired that I can hardly drag myself up the steps of the back gallery, so tired that I do not want any supper. (But of course it is long past suppertime anyway.) At the head of the stairway Miss Clara is waiting for me accusingly.

"You promised me, when you wrote that last novel, you'd never work this way again," she says. "And you're just as bad as ever. I don't see what you get out of it. . . . Mrs. Crager brought fifty more books to be autographed for the Basement Book Shop. She said she'd send for them the first thing in the morning. Just the same, I hope you won't touch them tonight."

6

Of course Miss Clara is not the only person who has wondered what I get out of it, though since she has been watching me in action for twenty years now, she comments on the general situation with more feeling than most. And very often I have asked myself the same question. As I have confessed, there was one time when I was so nearly sure the game was not worth the candle that I was

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tempted to give it up. But now I know I shall go on playing it, as well as I can, to the end.

There are several reasons for this. It is normal for anyone who has been independent for a long time to cherish such independence. If I were not a writer I should have to turn to my sons for at least partial support and this would be very hard for me. It would also be hard for them and their wives and their children, not only financially but in many other ways. They have a right to their own mode of life and their own viewpoint, unhampered by the mode of life and the viewpoint of a previous generation. And I have a right to mine. So far our relations have always been happy and harmonious. I want very much to keep them so. I do not believe I could if my associations with my family were based on necessity rather than on inclination.

It is also normal for anyone to derive a certain amount of satisfaction from success along a chosen line, especially if that success has been hard won. A cessation of work would, inevitably, mean a cessation of such satisfaction; moreover, complete idleness would be as wearisome as constant overendeavor. Of course, if it were possible to find the happy medium between the two, that would be ideal; but so far it has not been possible. Each new undertaking brings with it unexpected ramifications involving more study, more research, more correspondence, more conferences, more travel. And if I must choose between the horns of a dilemma, my choice is to go ahead at full speed rather than to come to a full stop.

There is another kind of satisfaction too, of even more consequence than the material one. This is the satisfaction derived from the feeling that your work has given pleasure or encouragement or help, or even all three, to other people.

I have spoken earlier of the disagreeable and depressing letters that come in and the ones that make unreasonable demands; but I would not be fair if I did not speak of the far greater number of appreciative letters, the letters that do far more for me than I can hope to do for their writers. Every mail brings at least one of these, usually several; they were especially numerous and significant during the war. "I read aloud all night from *Fielding's Folly* to my fellow refugees in a bomb shelter and we forgot we were in danger." . . . "I have been in the hospital six weeks now and most of the other men have been here longer. We have some of your books in the ward and we take turns in reading them and then we talk them over. It does help to pass the time. We thought perhaps you would like to know." . . . In the course of this period, I received a clipping from a London newspaper, unaccompanied by any personal word: "Wanted, a copy of *The Great Tradition* for a young girl who is dying and whose parents have not been able to procure a copy for her. Any reasonable price gladly paid."

Communications such as these are, inevitably, very moving; they act as a spur to greater and greater endeavor. When a tribute is paid in person, this is more moving still, and I had such a one in Merida, the capital of Yucatan. On the last day of my stay in the city, I took one of the funny little horse-drawn cabs which still offer the current means of transportation, and drove around for an hour. My attention was arrested by a display of gold filigree jewelry in a shopwindow, so I asked the driver to stop and got out to look at it. Next door to the jewelry store was a bookstore and I turned, instinctively, from one to the other. Almost the entire display in the bookstore window consisted of *El Camino del Rio — The River Road* in Spanish.

I stared at it in stupefaction for a moment and then I went inside and introduced myself to the proprietor. He received me with enthusiasm. Yes, the book was going very well, he told me — perhaps better than any other of mine so far, though they all did well. The only trouble was, he had difficulty in getting enough to supply the demand. Was there any way I could help him to get a larger allotment? And when could he expect a new novel? He had heard there was going to be another, this time with the scene laid in France.

I tried to listen to him and to answer him courteously and helpfully. But I was absorbed in watching the people who streamed by in the street and I was thinking very hard. Fully three fourths of the women going by were wearing the straight-cut native dresses made of white cotton and embroidered in bands of bright color around the square neck, the elbow sleeves, and the wide hems; they had black *rebozos* wound around their heads and throats and *alpargatas* on their bare feet. The men's costumes were almost invariably loose white trousers and loose white jackets, and many of them did not even wear sandals. They looked primitive and they looked poor. But evidently these people in Yucatan were buying my books, just as the people in Helsinki and the Canary Islands and Capetown and Manila were buying them — because they wanted them. Yes, and the people in Paris and The Hague and Stockholm and Madrid, in Washington, D.C., and Brattleboro, Vermont, and Little Rock, Arkansas, and New York City. And this meant that, whatever the critics said, I must somehow have succeeded in writing about the pleasures and sorrows, the desires and needs that are universal, in a way that could be universally understood and enjoyed. I was in touch with the human family throughout the world — rich and poor, old and young, wise and ignorant — because of my books; especially because of one book, which until then I had thought cost too much, both in cash and in kind. And suddenly I knew that no price was too high for such fellowship and such communion, that everything which had gone into my lifework was worth while.

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Atlantic Portrait

In the fifth volume of his autobiography, which is to be published this autumn under the title Noble Essences, SIR OSBERT SITWELL *has drawn for us the portraits of the authors and artists — some older than himself, some his contemporaries — who attracted him at his entrance to literature. In the August* Atlantic *we presented his recollections of Wilfred Owen, that great English poet of War and Pity. In 1920 Osbert and Sacheverell Sitwell went to Fiume intent on meeting Gabriele D'Annunzio, and the account of their visit follows.*

GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO

by SIR OSBERT SITWELL

1

GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO! The sound still carries with it a political as well as an aesthetic echo; yet who today remembers him as the Regent of Carnaro, and who, it may be, reads now the great poet who purified the Italian language, and wrote novels and plays which obtained a world-wide renown? Yet, in addition, D'Annunzio had long been a figure of universal fame, of a kind that scarcely attaches itself to anyone in this age. Indeed, it is difficult to find any just comparison for him, or prototype, except Byron.

Like Byron, he had become famous at a very early age — in his own case, in his teens — with his poems. The two men were alike in the shock their books created, in their force of character, and in their interests; though a great fire shone, too, in the oratory of D'Annunzio — a gift denied to Byron. But Byron's personality wielded as powerful an influence as D'Annunzio's, and each left his mark on the world forever, even though his books were for a time not read. Both poets in the end turned men of action and eventually sought refuge, after lives of dissipation, in political adventure. Both men provided innumerable scandals for the boudoir and drawing room: since, again like Byron, D'Annunzio, though he lacked the earlier writer's personal beauty and aristocratic background, was the hero of love affairs that were most eagerly discussed in the worlds of art and fashion. If the truth was obscure, then stories, of the most improbable kind, were invented for the consumption of the inmates of the salons of America and Europe.

Even today I can recall hearing one of them related: D'Annunzio, it was said, was spending the end of a love affair, and a long Italian autumn, in a decaying castle in the hills. The place was enormous, the scenery appropriate, but as the season dragged into winter, a bitter dullness invested the castle, no less than the love affair it sheltered, until again the surrounding world of neighbors and peasants was fluttered by the news that a lady in a white cloak rode into the courtyard at midnight and ensuing midnights on a white horse — or should I write white palfrey? — the explanation of this singularly tall story being that the lady in the flowing cloak was D'Annunzio, who had thus clothed himself in order to reawaken interest and induce those who beheld the phantom to believe that a new love was beginning. Such anecdotes were swallowed easily, for undoubtedly an element of sensationalism existed in him, as in various other artists. Inherent even in the name he invented for himself and used — Gabriele D'Annunzio — which attaches itself so easily to the titles of the Archangels of Italian Culture, is something of this quality, as well as of the same free indulgence in obvious flights of poetry, the same fondness for the old poetic symbols, which is to be found equally in, for example, his assumption of the pomegranate as his personal emblem, and in the imagery of his books.

The English-speaking peoples, in spite of poetry being essentially their art, have rarely admired poets as individuals: there has usually been, at any rate of recent centuries, a small and highly specialized audience for contemporary poetry and a popular dislike of it, and of those who write or are likely to write it. A poet, then, of D'Annunzio's type, with his intensely Latin approach to life, will be necessarily more unpopular in Anglo-Saxon countries than even Shelley or Swinburne.

Usually, there is less chance of kicking him. But D'Annunzio's usurpation of Fiume provided just such a rare opportunity. The press imputed to him not only an imperialistic outlook but a love of money, of power, of sensationalism; in fact, whether rightly or wrongly, he was arraigned for those very faults he shared with his accusers. But the real crime he committed in their eyes, but which was seldom mentioned, was that he appeared to be a great artist and as such would naturally be unpopular with the leaders of commercial states, and

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their businessmen. Only occasionally did the truth peep out in such a heading as "Fresh Attempts on Life of Crazy Poet" — for, in this similar to Lenin, Trotsky, and later to Hitler and his lieutenants, D'Annunzio had been time and time again triumphantly consigned to the asylum or, more effectively still, assassinated in the columns of the world press. No Power, one should have known, "would tolerate for an instant" the vicinity of a ruling poet; whatever might have been the artistic possibilities of his venture, they were killed, though the political and subversive ones were driven back to survive in a more acerbated form in their own country, for a time to conquer, and everywhere for many years to constitute a challenge to the established order that had been responsible for D'Annunzio's defeat: for Fascism was the child of Fiume.

Yet, though D'Annunzio was a poet, one would have expected the world public, or at any rate the Allied public of the 1914–1918 war, to have venerated him. By his reputation as a man of genius, and by his altogether exceptional powers of oratory and appeal, he had led Italy into the war on the side of the Allies. At least, then, those who admired and enjoyed the war should have admired D'Annunzio; no less for the great personal bravery he showed in the struggle, and for the inspiration his courage afforded to his countrymen, than for his success in political persuasion. But having incurred this heavy moral liability, D'Annunzio was soon made to feel that he had brought the Italians into the conflict under false pretenses, because, albeit secret treaties between England, France, and Italy guaranteed the Italians certain territories if the Allies won, these conditions, entered into without the knowledge of President Wilson, were never recognized by him, or carried out. And it was D'Annunzio's consequent feeling of being accountable for this failure, his belief that Italy had come out of the war on a par with the defeated nations, that made him risk his life once again at Fiume.

Thus, to the Italian people, who know no fear of poetry, D'Annunzio remained not only the man who had done more for their language than any other writer since Dante, and the patriot who had alone stood out against what they considered the futilities of the Peace Conference, but — it was a popular claim in Italy — he was supposed, by his seizure of Fiume, to have been the cause of the fall of President Wilson, to whom, in a speech, he had characteristically referred as "that coldhearted maniac who sought to crucify Italy with nails torn from the German Chancellor of the Scrap of Paper."

2

It was at the end of November, 1920, on the shores of the Neapolitan Bay, that the idea of Fiume first laid hold on us. My brother suddenly remarked to me, as we stood on a terrace overlooking the sea, mountains, and islands: —

"We never saw Lenin seize power in Petrograd: let us now go to Fiume to see D'Annunzio. It may be the beginning of something else."

Immediately I realized with what truth he spoke; for here was a small state seized and ruled over by a poet, and who could tell but that it might develop into an ideal land where the arts would flourish once more on Italian soil as they had so often blossomed before. It might even offer an alternative or escape from the Scylla and Charybdis of modern life, Slum-Bolshevism or Democratic Bungalow-Rash — morbid states of the soul that are of no help to the artist.

Whatever, then, may be thought of the results of the Fiume adventure, my brother was right: the moment, the man, the place were of importance. I at once telegraphed to my friend Massingham, asking if I might write for the *Nation*, of which he was editor, an account of D'Annunzio's Fiume, and obtained permission to represent the journal. My brother and I then decided to invite Orioli, the Florentine bookseller, to accompany us, for he was an entertaining and appreciative companion, and his knowledge of the ways of his countrymen and their language might prove invaluable.

We arrived in Trieste in the evening, just as dusk had fallen. The harsh north wind with the Greek name blew along the stony streets of the city and roared in the piazzas. The electric light failed — perhaps, for such was then its way, as a fresh tribute to the anarchist Malatesta — and the fur-capped, flat-faced Slavonic peasants from outlying villages huddled together in clumps, speaking outlandish tongues, within the barren shelter of the great drafty station. No one there, least of all guard or porter, seemed to know when the train would start for Fiume. Italian officers, *Arditi*, Wolves of Tuscany, gesticulated in groups outside an obsolete train. Cloaks, daggers, and the feathers of eagles proclaimed rather melodramatically that the Roman legions were assembling once more under a new Caesar, while, further, the flowing black ties of the *Arditi* indicated that the new Caesar was a poet. Through the pervading braggadocio atmosphere, through the noisy, vapid chatter, there flickered like a flame an unmistakable enthusiasm, not often at that time to be encountered.

At last the groups broke up, and the individuals who composed them settled noisily into their chosen places in the antiquated train. There was no light in carriages or corridors, but as the train jolted higher into the hills, the snow outside threw a ghostly, almost green illumination on the faces within. Even at this distance, the influence of D'Annunzio was omnipresent and his name scarcely ever left the conversation.

First the somewhat Jugoslav lady in the corner, with eyebrows that even in this pallid obscurity

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could be seen to meet and intertwine, complained that the cause of Fiume had become a Massacre of the Innocents, a Children's Crusade. And indeed the officer who sat next me confessed that he was smuggling into the Regency the two enthusiasts of sixteen years of age who accompanied him. They had tried to become legionaries a year before, but on the score of their youth had been turned back by the Italian troops at the border. Both lads were evidently caught in the magic net of D'Annunzio's words, and their pockets were heavy with his speeches, prayers, and threats, which at great labor to themselves they had copied out in a round but flowing hand. They vowed that if they could not get through to Fiume on the train, they would walk there, over the frozen mountains — and thousands of boys, they declared, would do the same from all over Italy: for Gabriele D'Annunzio remained until his death the idol of young Italy. Even the lady with the eyebrows admitted that when the Regent rode out through the stony countryside the people, whether Italian or Croat, would strew the ground with flowers.

3

Eventually we arrived at Fiume. Below us lay the giant warehouses and docks, in plain disproportion to the size of the town. In the harbor was congregated D'Annunzio's by no means negligible fleet. Some of the vessels had been captured by the poet's pirates, others — like the *Dante*, which had deserted to him from the Italian Navy — by his phrases. The leviathan outline of this great ship loomed up into the cold darkness, and its lights, and those of the smaller boats round it, flickered threateningly. Otherwise all was dark, and it was difficult to comprehend the conformation of the port until the next day. Then the sun sparkled and it was possible to appreciate the disposition of the place, with its clustered houses and its bay, a spur of hills sinking into the opalescence of the far seas, and the quivering misty outlines of the islands.

The cold, which was intense, crystallized each sound into a greater precision. But the human element was here of more interest than the form of hills or the incidence of climate. Outside our hotel was the chief Piazza, where the Governor had placed two flagstaffs, the idea of which derived from his beloved Venice. And in the Piazza at all hours of morning and afternoon loitered a crowd as fantastic as any — even when one recalls the tumblers and clowns, Turks and Oriental merchants in turbans — ever sheltered by the bubble domes of St. Mark's. The general animation and noisy vitality seemed to herald a new land, a new system. We gazed and listened in amazement. Every man here seemed to wear a uniform designed by himself. Some had beards, and had shaved their heads completely, so as to resemble the Commander himself, who was now bald; others had cultivated huge tufts of hair, half a foot long, waving out from their foreheads, and wore, balanced on the very back of the skull, a black fez. Cloaks, feathers, and flowing black ties were universal, and every man — and few women were to be seen — carried the "Roman dagger." Suddenly, as some messenger arrived — it might be an emissary of the Regent himself — on a very palpitating motor bicycle, a stir would pass through the throng so full of swagger and of youth — and yet, as I write this, I recall that, included in the gathering, as if to prove that youth was not universal or eternal, were two Garibaldian veterans with red waistcoats and white hair. But even they seemed to possess some paradoxical secret, and behaved in a manner that gave the lie to their years.

As we walked up the hill to the Palace, we reflected how, by the singular magic of his personality, D'Annunzio had succeeded in uniting for a time those who loved the past of Italy with those who hated it. Some had been drawn to his cause by the fervor of his words, and by the glamour of ancient and decayed cities such as Torcello, Ravenna, or Mantua, while others, who agreed with Marinetti in thinking Venice a city of dead fish and rotting palaces, inhabited by waiters and touts, saw in the policy of the Regent the means of making Italy into a new Roman Empire, mighty in arms, a dangerous and insolent power with skyscrapers and an efficient train service — ideals, as it turned out, afterwards inherited and finally for a time achieved by Mussolini.

The hill was steep and we walked up it slowly to the Palace, built in the well-known Renaissance-elephantoid style that is the dream of every Municipal Council the world over — for it had formerly been the Town Hall. Everything was large and square — but in fact not quite large enough. You entered a large square hall, with pillars supporting a square gallery. D'Annunzio's love of the exotic had caused this apartment to be filled with hundreds of pale plaster flowerpots of every size, but all incised with Byzantine patterns or Celtic trellis, and containing palms and succulents. Soldiers lounged among the greenery, and typists rushed furiously through swing doors.

In the square gallery, and leading out of the side situated nearest the sea, were the rooms of the poet, always closely guarded: because he would often remain for eighteen hours at a time shut up in his apartment, and during these periods of thought he would take no food and must on no account be disturbed. Today, as it happened, one of these stretches of work had begun, and in consequence, since no one knew when he would return to life, we were forced to pass two days of an incredible monotony, broken solely by a lecture on the political situation of the Regency of Carnaro, which

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was delivered to us by the Foreign Minister. This gentleman held the unique distinction of being the only bore in Fiume — a fact proclaimed by all who knew him, but which we were destined to find out for ourselves. In looks, he belonged to the small mustachioed, tactical-authority type and, while my brother and I balanced tall frames in agonized positions over diminutive maps, he laid down the law in that flowery French, reinforced with a twang like a guitar, which is the official language of so many Italians and Spaniards. . . . At last, just as the lecture ended, we were informed that the poet would receive us the next day.

4

At five o'clock the following evening we were, accordingly, conducted to D'Annunzio's study. Our sole interview with him lasted only three quarters of an hour, but it would be impossible soon to forget it. As we entered, I recall a Portuguese journalist was just being shown out, reiterating fulsomely in Italian as he stepped backward out of the presence: "The Portuguese nation regards you as the Christ of the Latin World — the Christ of the Latin World — the . . ." When he had gone, in the ensuing silence, the repetition of the words could still be heard from the next room, and then gradually died away.

The study was fairly large, and contained little furniture. Its walls were almost entirely covered with banners. On the inner side, supported by brackets, stood stiffly two gilded saints from Florence, their calm, wide-open eyes gazing out over the deepening shades of the Fiumian sea. Near the fireplace, on one of the tables, rose the shape of a vast fifteenth-century bell, made by the famous bellmaker of Arbe, and presented to D'Annunzio by the people of that island. At the central desk sat the Commander himself, with his pomegranate in front of him, behind inkstand and pens.

Often an analogy in appearance will summon up more effectively for the reader the look of a man than can the most elaborate and precise description. What can one say? That D'Annunzio was small, lightly made, dressed in gray uniform, had a face of rather Arab cast — he came from the southeast of Italy — and streaky mustache and embryo beard. But if I write that — as was the case — the first thing that struck one was that he bore a distinct resemblance to Igor Stravinsky, the admirers of that great genius can picture D'Annunzio more easily. The poet wore many ribbons and on his left shoulder carried the Italian Gold Medal for valor, the equivalent of our Victoria Cross. Though he was completely and grotesquely bald, though only his left eye remained — for he had lost the other in the war — though he was nervous and exhausted, yet at the end of a few seconds the extraordinary charm he possessed, which had enabled him on many occasions to change mobs of enemies into furious partisans, had exercised itself on us.

He began to speak. The first words he addressed to us were, "Well, what new poets are there in England?" (Not, you will notice, "What new generals are there?" or "Who plays for Woolwich Arsenal?") Then he went on to talk of our country, and of his fervent admiration for Shelley, whose death he himself had tried to imitate at the age of fifteen in the Bay of Castellammare. In his discourse there was not a little, to northern ears, of absurdity, but through it ran the hypnotic thread of his eloquence. He switched soon from poetry to sport, and talked of English greyhounds — which, after poetry, he considered evidently the greatest national specialty — "running wild over the moors of Devonshire." He proceeded to tell us of the strange conversations which he held with the people. A silent crowd would begin to collect, and then swell quickly outside the Palace. He would go out onto the balcony and demand what it was they wanted. A voice would answer, and thus would gradually build itself up a system of direct intercourse between the people and their ruler. This he claimed to be the first example of such interplay since Greek times.

He told us, too, of Fiume and of his intense loneliness there; of how he, who had always loved books and music, had remained in his city for fifteen months, surrounded solely by peasants and soldiers, while the Italian government, relying on his roving temperament, tried to "bore him out." He spoke of the enthusiasm of his legionaries, and declared how difficult it was to keep them at peace: weary of waiting for battle, they would fight one another in some sham contest, and it was by no means unusual for there to be serious casualties from bombs and bullet wounds.

Soon after his proclamation, for instance, of the Fiumian Constitution, in which he had announced that music was to be the "Religious and Social Institution of the Regency of Carnaro," he had invited an eminent Italian conductor to bring his orchestra over from Trieste and give a series of concerts, and had provided for him a fight for the orchestra to witness. Four thousand troops, among whom were the two Garibaldian veterans whom we had seen — one aged seventy-eight and the other eighty-four — had taken part in the contest, and one hundred men had been seriously injured by bombs. The members of the orchestra, which had been playing during the quieter intervals, fired by a sudden access of enthusiasm, dropped their instruments, and charged and captured the trenches. Five of them were badly hurt in the struggle.

This new principality seemed full of paradox and of hope, as well as of a certain menace; but the Muse of History had decreed that it should fall within

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a few weeks of our visit. Giolitti showed his native cunning and unrivaled experience by the way in which he brought matters to a head. D'Annunzio had always relied on the fact that feeling in Italy was so strongly in his favor that no Italian government would dare openly to oppose him, still less to use its forces against him; but Giolitti, the crafty old politician, contrived that the whole affair should be over before the Italian people could be aware that it had begun. He waited until the night before Christmas Eve, so that he could be sure that no newspapers would appear for three days, and then sent the fleet to Fiume, with instructions to bombard the place to pieces if the poet remained there. There seemed only one thing for D'Annunzio to do: to leave before the inhabitants were exposed to the fulfillment of this threat. . . . When the news of the fall of Fiume spread, on the morning after Boxing Day, shops and theaters in all parts of Italy were closed as a sign of popular mourning, but it was too late for public opinion to exercise any force — if ever it can in modern conditions.

This rather pitiful end of the poet's adventure was hailed with relief by the press. It was supposed to finish "an awkward incident," while the poet himself — for whom no word had been good enough when his eloquence had so largely helped to persuade Italy to enter the war — was now abused and insulted. In some instances, this frail little genius, who had flown over Vienna during the war, as well as over the most perilous of battlefields and over the Austrian fleet, of which he had destroyed two battleships, was now accused of cowardice in leaving Fiume — a charge that he could afford to spurn.

In some cases the writers who attacked him showed hitherto unsuspected powers of imagination. Thus one journalist, in an article published in an English daily paper, headed *Chorus Girls and Champagne*, declared that one could tell from "the glassy glitter of D'Annunzio's snake-like eye" that he was addicted to cocaine! This compelled me — for D'Annunzio had not many champions at that moment — to write a reply, in which I pointed out that this "glassy glitter" was not to be attributed to the drug habit, but to the fact that one of the poet's eyes was, in fact, made of glass, since he had lost his own in the war, so recently over, while fighting on behalf of the Allied peoples, among whom the proprietor of the paper in which the libel appeared, and the writer of it, were numbered.

The poet has long been dead, and is today neither insulted daily nor praised. Together with the majority of the great army of the dead, he is out of fashion. Yet truly, though I have here written an impression of an episode in his life, it is his writings, more than his actions, which are of interest, as must always be the case with an author. His novels, so tremendous in their power of evoking emotion, and in their poetic eloquence and rhetoric — books such as *Il Fuoco*, *Le Vergini delle Rocce*, *Il Piacere*, plays like *La Città Morta* — are there for us to reawaken and revive by our interest. In them is to be found often an overwhelming force of imagery, and sometimes a certain quality of lushness — though this does not apply to his poems — that might be cloying, were not its sweetness also contaminated and reduced by the morbidity prevalent at the end of the old century.

The public always clamors for a message in poetry or prose; seldom is it more angry than when it gets one. But what words can picture its rage when a poet, having for years preached his message, proceeds, as did Tolstoy and D'Annunzio, for example, to translate it into action? Tolstoy, abandoning wealth and family, and finally running off to die in the snow at a wayside railway station, in an attempt to hide from those he had abandoned to their worldly fate, was accused of insincerity; so was D'Annunzio. He had for years preached the importance of being a leader of men, the importance of staying for years immured in the dark strength of your travertine palace, impervious to the light and clamor of the democratic days outside, of waiting for your moment to emerge, armed in the full panoply of your strength, then to act swiftly and with decision. He followed his own advice. For a time he led and acted swiftly. Today his politics belong to the past, so derided by the Futurists who supported his actions, where his written words, which they criticized, belong to the present and the future, and are still there for us to read, their meaning moving and flickering through the immortal phrases, in the same way that a salamander, in part obscured by the smoke of a great fire, might be seen to glow.

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Since 1929, 40 per cent of the newspapers in the United States have either closed up shop or been consolidated into a newspaper chain. We have asked GERALD W. JOHNSON, *biographer, critic, and for seventeen years one of the leading editorial writers of the Baltimore* Sunpapers, *to emphasize what this means in terms of news coverage and the loss of freedom of editorial opinion, and where the remedy may be found.*

THE MONOPOLY OF NEWS

by GERALD W. JOHNSON

1

THE final going down of the New York *Sun* is said to have thrown twelve hundred newspaper workers out of employment. The individual tragedies involved in this catastrophe are justly regarded as of more than local concern; they have a large social significance as evidence of the constricting limits of one field of human endeavor, that of daily journalism. Daily newspaper work, if not a dying profession, is certainly a shrinking one, which is a matter of concern to newspapermen everywhere, not merely in New York City.

But the figure has another significance, not for newspapermen only, but for every citizen of the United States. It takes twelve hundred men to get out a daily newspaper in New York, and that by no means the largest.

This statement portrays a change in American journalism, not only in degree but also in kind, since the time when the New York *Sun* was founded. It means that the newspaper proprietor of 1950 is not the same kind of man that he was in 1833 and earlier, and this invalidates some forms of traditional thinking. It was in 1787 that Thomas Jefferson wrote to Edward Carrington that if he had to choose between government without newspapers and newspapers without government "I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter," and perhaps he would have repeated the assertion as late as 1833; but it does not necessarily follow that he would say the same thing in 1950. In 1787 Jefferson undoubtedly would have said that he preferred a horse to a car for getting about the country; but he would not say so now. Yet the meaning of the word "car" has changed hardly more since his time than has the word "newspaper."

If you doubt it, consider the origin of the newspaper whose death last January threw twelve hundred persons out of employment. The New York *Sun* began in a saloon that flourished just off Newspaper Row in the eighteen-thirties. There four cronies sat together after work nearly every day and discussed the state of the world over tankards. Three of them were printers — honest, hard-working men without a doubt, but certainly no earth-shakers — named Benjamin H. Day, William Swaim, and Arunah S. Abell. These were youngsters, all in their twenties. The fourth member of the group was in his forties, an amusing fellow, but a notorious ne'er-do-well, always out at elbows, and probably regarded by steady-going artisans as little better than a bum. His name was James Gordon Bennett.

Day alone was his own master. He was the proprietor of a small job-printing establishment. Swaim and Abell were compositors, and Bennett was a reporter at those relatively infrequent times when he had a job. But they are not so remembered. Historians recall them today as the founders, respectively, of the New York *Sun*, the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, the Baltimore *Sun*, and the New York *Herald*, four newspapers that revolutionized American journalism.

Day brought out the first issue of the *Sun* in September, 1833, with the assistance of one reporter and two carrier-boys, and it was a success from the start. The last issue was brought out with the assistance of twelve hundred people, and it was a failure. Another Day, to start another newspaper that would be instantly recognized as better than any existing in New York, would probably have to start with a couple of thousand people. Marshall Field employed hundreds to get *PM* going in New York and it eventually gave up the ghost. He has had a very difficult time with the Chicago *Sun*. In short, the only kind of man who can start a big-city newspaper in 1950 is one with many millions at his command, and even he has no assurance of success.

The explanation is that the collection and dissemination of news in 1950 requires such tremendous equipment and such vast numbers of people that it can be undertaken only by men in control of im-

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mense capital resources. Yet it is a necessity — in fact, the prime necessity — for the successful functioning of the sort of government we have developed. Jefferson's remark requires adaptation, without essential change; we cannot have our kind of government without newspapers, and excellent newspapers, at that.

Remember that next November we shall have to choose the members of the Eighty-second Congress, which will determine — if only by the method of blocking — the policy of the United States for the next two years; and upon the policy of the United States depends the destiny of a large part of the world. The selection of representatives competent to deal with the problems that will confront that Congress is therefore of supreme importance. But the gravest of those problems will take shape as a result of what is now happening, not in the next county, but on the other side of the world. What you and I know about what is happening there is what the press tells us. Under the best circumstances our decision in November may be the wrong one; but if the information on which the decision is based is false, then the decision is bound to be false. We are hostages of fortune who will inevitably be sacrificed if the press fails to keep faith.

2

ACCURATE news is not merely a prime necessity in a representative democracy: it is *the* prime necessity. Nothing takes precedence over it.

But when any article is a necessity and when that article cannot be supplied except by an immense organization at vast expense, the business of purveying it becomes a natural monopoly. Communication is such a necessity. No rational man dreams that the public interest would be served by setting up a competing post office in every town. We did try competing telephone companies for a while, but the system didn't work. Water is a necessity, but supplying it is a natural monopoly, and to have two sets of water mains in every street would be sheer insanity.

News is rapidly assuming the status of water, communication, and electricity. Supplying it calls for an immense, and increasing, capital investment and very large daily expenditures. Whether it comes through newspapers, by radio-television, or through the movies, it involves the employment of millions of money and thousands of men; and only great capitalists, usually in the form of great corporations, can undertake it. This means that supplying news assumes every day more of the nature of a natural monopoly.

It is already collectivized to a high degree. The Associated Press, the United Press, and the International News Service are all essentially coöperatives, even when, as in the case of INS, they preserve the form of private ownership. The local newspaper is simply an outlet, as is the individual member of a coöperative chain-store group. As regards the purity of the product, this has worked well. Even if one newspaper wished to adulterate the news, it would have little chance to do so when nine hundred and ninety-nine others draw from the same source, and many of them would object to any adulteration proposed.

But such tremendous technological changes have certainly altered the nature of the institution, and when the very nature of an institution alters, its position in the social structure calls for reconsideration. A car, in Jefferson's day, was a horse-drawn vehicle, usually clumsy and always slow. The invention of the internal-combustion engine changed its nature. Not only were the horses discarded, but the whole attitude of society toward the vehicle changed and an entirely new field of law and an almost entirely new field of engineering were created to express that attitude.

A newspaper, in Jefferson's day, was a journal of opinion as well as a disseminator of information. It not only published the news, but it interpreted it in comment expressing the opinion of the newspaper editor. When editorial opinion expressed the views of such people as Day, Abell, Swaim, and Bennett, it reflected pretty faithfully the opinion of the masses, for even when these men had become successful and comparatively rich they were not far removed from their origin.

It is interesting to remember that when Day, within four months, was selling four thousand copies of the New York *Sun* at a cent apiece, the other three rushed out and set up penny papers of their own — Bennett in New York, Swaim in Philadelphia, Abell in Baltimore. An enterprise that could take in the prodigious sum of forty dollars a day from circulation alone was, in their estimation, colossal. But a man who can manage successfully an enterprise taking in forty thousand dollars a day differs widely, in most of his attitudes and ways of thinking, from a man who is impressed by receipts of forty dollars a day. His opinions, therefore, are not likely to reflect faithfully the opinions of the masses.

The accuracy of this inference is attested by the fact that for the past eighteen years the majority of the American press — among big-city newspapers, the overwhelming majority — has opposed the party in power. At the same time, the majority of the voters — in the big cities the overwhelming majority — has supported that party. Thus it is evident that whatever opinion the newspapers reflect, it is not the opinion of the majority.

This is no proof that newspaper opinion is wrong, but it is proof that it is not popular opinion. So the question arises, Should this opinion, plainly not acceptable to the majority, be inseparably attached to a necessity — to wit, news?

If we are to live without excessive inconvenience

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in a modern city, telephones we must have, gas and electricity we must have. Hence it is unavoidably necessary to admit into our homes telephone repairmen, meter readers, and inspectors. But if these employees of the telephone company and of the gas and electric companies should take advantage of that necessity to instruct us how to vote next November, think of the howl that would go up! Why, then, should the purveyor of another necessity, news, be allowed the privilege of thrusting upon us unwanted and unacceptable advice? Why should the function of disseminating news, now that it approaches the status of a monopoly, continue to be bound to the function of interpreting news, which is distinctly different and which, under no circumstances, should be monopolized?

This is not an assertion that corporations engaged in this essentially monopolistic enterprise should be forbidden to form and express opinions on public men and public affairs. Not only are they guaranteed that right by the First Amendment to the Constitution, but the whole history of ideas supports the theory that the truth is most likely to prevail where every variety of opinion may be published without let or hindrance. To forbid a newspaper to publish an opinion on any subject, even though it is the composite opinion of a corporation, not that of any of the men who write the newspaper, would be a step away from liberty and, as I believe, away from truth.

The question is this: Should a corporation enjoying a monopolistic position in the distribution of a necessity be permitted to use that position to give its own opinion a preferred position over any other by attaching that opinion to the necessary product it purveys? We do not allow it to radio, which, by reason of the limited number of channels available, is also a natural monopoly. The Federal Communications Commission requires a radio corporation, if it expresses a controversial opinion, to give equal time to the expression of opposing opinion. If that is just as regards radio, why is it unjust as regards any other medium of communication?

As a matter of fact, many American newspapers have already seen the point and have taken, on their own initiative, steps to fortify their position. In one-newspaper towns it is a common practice for the journal enjoying the monopoly to print every day comment diametrically opposed to its own views; and few reputable newspapers will refuse to print a letter to the editor because it takes issue with the paper's stand on a matter of public interest. Some journals not only reprint opposing comment from other sources, but go to considerable expense in buying from syndicates signed columns written by men known to be of an opposing political or economic faith.

But this is at most a plea in confession and avoidance. It attests an honorable disposition on the part of the press to play fair, and acquits it of a determination to accomplish by monopoly what the government is forbidden to do by law — namely, to abridge freedom of speech. However, it does not affect the relation of the institution to society. It proves only that American opinion has an intelligent and, on the whole, a benevolent master, not that it has no master. Opinion is free only when nobody can monopolize it, not when nobody does monopolize it.

3

It is widely believed that certain popular columnists, not always the more intelligent ones, swing more votes in every election than the greatest newspaper in the United States. The returns for the past eighteen years certainly suggest it.

Within the craft this may be taken as another brutal assault on that favorite target of every sniper, the editorial writer. If it were so, it would be inexcusable, for I have been an editorial writer myself, and know the virtues of the breed. Editorial writing is, or ought to be, journalism's final and best contribution to society and the state. In view of the immensity and complexity of the volume of news now poured upon the American public, careful and skillful interpretation of the significance of that news is more important and more valuable today than it ever was before. An interpretation made by a detached observer with wide information and, above all, long experience in reading newspapers can lead the average man to the truth in a fraction of the time it would take him to get there himself by floundering through the news with no guidance.

What the country needs is not the abolition of editorial writers, but more, many more, and better ones. But as daily newspapers decrease in numbers there are fewer positions open to such men; and as the corporate form grows vaster and more complex, their independence is more and more restricted. My suggestion is that the editorial writer is badly placed on a daily newspaper, and that his position grows worse with every newspaper that collapses. He deals, not so much with events, as with the ideas that spring from events, and in the battle of ideas one's weapons are burnished and sharpened by the clash of contending opinions — and the number of contending opinions has been reduced by 40 per cent since 1929, by the disappearance of daily newspapers in that proportion.

Unfortunately, we have not developed in this country any place for this kind of worker that can serve as an alternative to the daily newspaper. With us, the journal of opinion is still rudimentary. The *Nation* and the *New Republic* have existed precariously, even as weeklies; a daily devoted to the propagation of ideas is unknown and, to most American newspapermen, unimaginable. Pre-war Paris, to be sure, could manage thirty-one, but not New York; and it is true enough that only a handful

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of the Parisian dailies were genuinely interested in ideas. The rest were pretty much scavengers.

Nevertheless, although the French may never have pulled it off, it is possible that they had the right idea, and it is conceivable that in time we may take it over and make it work better. That the American daily press is in a period of transition is plain to the dullest. In speed it has already been superseded; the radio can outdistance it so easily that the old-time extra long ago disappeared, and the scoop is now practically unknown. Added to economic giantism, this plainly points to the day when most cities will rely for news of record on one huge journal, issued twice — and in large cities possibly three times — a day.

But no one will look to it for opinion any more than people now look to the telephone or the electric light company for opinion. That will be supplied by a multitude of four-page sheets sold for a cent but written by exceptionally alert and well-informed men. Not being burdened with responsibility for millions of other people's money, as a conscientious executive of a large newspaper is, they will say what they think, and they will usually think accurately. The monopolistic newspaper will continue to tell the world what happened yesterday; but small, fugitive sheets will tell it what is going to happen tomorrow. Many will guess wrong, and perish, but others will appear to replace them, for it will not take a Marshall Field to start one; any fairly prosperous job-printer, such as Benjamin H. Day, can do it, and when one comes along who pretty consistently guesses right, he will flourish. He will never be able to build another San Simeon to rival Hearst's, or endow the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as Munsey did, but he will take in forty dollars a day, and may even net that much after he has paid off his printer and a couple of writing hands.

That would be an income of twelve thousand dollars a year, which is mere pocket-change to a big modern publisher. But this lad would collect something else. Assuming that he really understood the news and knew how to explain it, and assuming that he actually did so, considering only the interest of the average man, not that of any corporation or class or political party, it would not be long before everybody in town would be reading his sheet and in addition to his forty dollars he would be taking in something else — he would be acquiring influence to an incredible extent.

Some men like that better than money, and such men include many of the best newspaper workers. Suppose the monopolistic journal continued to roll up millions for its owners but, if it thundered at all, continued to thunder for the current Landon, with the traditional result — eight electoral votes. And suppose some owner of a journal of opinion, able to compile his income tax return on the short form, was also able to look over mayors, and governors, and Congressmen, and say to one go, and he goeth, and to another come, and he cometh — well, I know plenty of men who would not hesitate for an instant to take the short income with the long reach. They would not impress bankers, but they would have a wonderful time.

Be that as it may, the ordinary voter in this country should prepare himself to consider some startling arguments over the rights, privileges, and duties of the American press, and that within a short time. For the trend toward monopoly is irreversible. It was not planned by malefactors of great wealth, or by malefactors of any kind. Most of the caterwauling about the "capitalistic press" and its sins is sheer bosh. If it is a menace to liberty it was made so by its virtues, not by its sins. Its very excellence as a purveyor of news has made it so expensive that it can no longer reflect, much less mold, the opinions of the impecunious majority; yet that expense has put it into the position of a natural monopoly.

The result is that free opinion must find some other channel. What that channel will be, only the seventh son of a seventh son is competent to guess. But it will be found. To doubt it would be to doubt the final perseverance of intelligence.

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An Atlantic "First"

A STORY

LEWIS GELFAN, *whose first novel,* The Embroidered City, *appeared this year, is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin who, after varied experiences in the Air Force and as a vice-consul in our Foreign Service, came back to Nantucket to do his serious writing. In recent months he has been journeying about Europe mostly by bicycle, putting together material for a book concerned with Americans abroad. "Eventually," he says, "I would like to return to the States, buy a ranch in Idaho, and get a play produced in New York."*

A WOMAN LAWRENCE KNEW

by LEWIS GELFAN

SOONER or later something would change, but it was a question of how long one could continue like this. It was humiliating to think of the dozen chambermaids, not to speak of the clerks, the waiters, and the two chefs, all on full salary — and the hotel empty, except for the American lady, one negligible guest. The maids had nothing to do but gossip, the clerks had developed a technique of sleeping with an attentive expression on their face, and the waiters sat in the kitchen all day drinking coffee and, he supposed, stuffing themselves with pasta. At that rate they would soon be bursting out of their serving jackets and require new ones.

But the two chefs were the real problem. If he told Bonsard, his head chef from Flims, that he was closing the hotel for a month, perhaps until the first of April, Bonsard like any Frenchman would take the first train to Paris and disappear, perhaps for good. On the other hand, if it went on like this, with nothing to do in the kitchen but argue, and Bonsard spending hour after hour explaining to the second chef, Carozzi, the inferiority of Italian cooks, the mediocrity of Italian wine, the insipidity of Italian women and the impotency of Italian men, compared with the French, it might end with their having to bury him, also for good.

Carozzi, a Sicilian, lacked imagination as a chef, but to see him handle his knives was poetry. When he could no longer bear to listen to Bonsard he went quietly to the meat table and sharpened his knives. He ground each blade to a fineness that, as the waiters who sat eating pasta said, would serve to shave the beard of an angel. Carozzi addressed his knives by name endearingly, restraining them with an effort as they quivered in his hand, each begging permission to carve up what he called the French pork. But his restraint would not last forever.

No, it could not continue. Rain every day since the beginning of the month, desolating, not half a dozen tourists to be found in a resort with two dozen hotels. Only the luxury class Villa Grecia could afford to keep on all its help, with their ridiculous uniforms of pseudo-Greek tunics, and the two doormen who stood, hoplite shield in arm, against the pseudo-Doric columns at the entrance to the hotel. He could not afford to remain open simply because the Villa Grecia did. They were not in the same category; his was, quite exactly, a first-class hotel, a Swiss hotel. He catered to what he called the solid class of tourists, those who traveled regularly and spent freely but expected something for their money. Only people who didn't know what to do with their money went to *lus* hotels, where that problem was quickly settled. The Villa Grecia. Americans went there out of ignorance, and wealthy Italians out of pride; but they were no loss to him, that trade. He never believed in attracting a clientele which could not afford the rates: they stayed only a short time, skimped on their meals and drinks or bought them elsewhere. It was the same in Switzerland, worse after the war, with so many people who did not know what to do with their money: they were bad for the hotel business.

Still, he had been a fool to sell out, to come to Sicily and buy an interest in the Swizzero. He thought of the old Flimserhof, in February, the log fires in the hearths, skiers tramping in and out all day, whistling and singing, the bar packed, people

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standing shoulder to shoulder, clinking glasses of hot rum and mulled wine. . . .

That was enough. He would close the hotel, all except the bar, as soon as the American lady left. She had only come yesterday, but there was nothing for her to do here, in the rain; she looked miserable. At the first opportunity he would remind her that the airport autobus left at six o'clock.

He walked down the corridor past the open door of the bar, saw the American lady was still inside, and went on into the reception room. The carved Swiss clock (he had brought it from Zurich, wanting his guests to have that sense of security that comes with having a reliable timepiece in the establishment) struck three. He went to the door and looked out. A soggy, wet mass of sky, sirocco weather — there was no predicting what it would do.

The high season in Sicily. It was impossible. He could imagine nothing more useless to the hotel business than rain. Snow or ice one could manage, but rain was impossible. Rain invariably made the guests feel they were being cheated, and nothing one could provide by way of indoor amusement made any difference; they would write letters the first afternoon, and perhaps the second, but on the third they would pack.

2

The quarter hour struck. Less than three hours now before the airport bus would leave. Providing the American lady was on it, he could give the staff notice tonight, and by the end of the week be able to catch the Rome Express for Zurich. If the American lady did not leave — no, that would be stupid.

He decided to give her a push. A very small push, but a push. It went sharply against his instincts, to turn out a guest, but a look at the rows of empty mailboxes over the reception desk and another look at the weather subdued his instincts. He snapped his fingers at the glassy-eyed clerk, standing like a wax figure behind the desk.

"Let me have that passport."

"The American lady's passport, Signor Bernhardt?" The clerk stirred briskly into life.

"Who else's?"

"Sì, Signore. I shall send it to the room?"

"Just give it to me."

"Sì, Signore. Scusi."

The American lady was sitting on a barstool, reading labels on the liquor shelf above the long mirror. There was no one else in the bar except Carlo the bartender, who was trying to bring in a clear station over the static on the radio, and the boy Janni, his helper, who was studying a book of English lessons while he polished glasses. Bernhardt walked in smiling and laid the passport on the bar.

"I beg your pardon, but you will want this back, of course."

"Oh, do I need it now?"

"Not actually, Madame. Simply a precaution, so that you have it when you depart. Occasionally the clerks are negligent."

"It never happened to me before. Everything is different now, I suppose. I always used to stay in reliable hotels."

Bernhardt closed his eyes for a fleeting moment while the spasm passed. He smiled. "We would in any case have forwarded it to you, Madame. I suppose you will be going on to Rome, for the theater?"

"I don't know. I never know where I'm going next. I came here to see the almond blossoms, but you have all this rain. When is it going to stop?"

Bernhardt shrugged with a long, slow lift of his arms toward heaven. "In God's own time, I am afraid."

"You must be having a terrible season."

"Oh, I would hardly say that."

"You aren't starting very well," the American lady said. "I never remember so much rain here in February. My family always brought me here to see the almond trees in bloom. We stayed at the Pensione Venere and had a wonderful time."

"I am told one is very comfortable there." (If one could put up with broken bedsprings, damp sheets, and a second-rate kitchen, he murmured to himself.)

"It wasn't to save money. Mother never cared about that. But it's more fun in a pensione, don't you think? So many people. You meet really distinguished people there, too. When I found the Venere was closed I almost went right away. But I suppose I shouldn't go without seeing the almond blossoms."

Bernhardt tapped thoughtfully on the American lady's passport, edging it toward her. "I could easily send out someone to cut a sprig for you."

"Oh, no. I want to see them on the trees. I want to walk under the trees and smell them and have the blossoms drop into my hair."

He glanced automatically at her hair: it was a colorless brown, probably dyed, he thought, and propped up in a shapeless fluff over her forehead. Almond blossoms in that hair. He closed his eyes again and shuddered, remembering the coiffures that had paraded through his foyer in the Flimserhof. Smiling at the American lady he said, "At this moment the rain is really very slight. You might be refreshed by a small promenade. It is merely ten minutes' walk to the hillside."

The American lady revolved slowly about on the barstool. "I don't think I ought to go out. I might catch cold. I hate to lie in bed in a hotel room. It makes me cry."

She seemed on the point of giving a demonstration. Bernhardt begged her pardon and withdrew. The boy Janni, who had raised his voice in order to hear himself over the others' conversation, was saying his lessons (in rhyme for easy remembering): —

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". . . Good ev-ven-ning Mis-ter Smith. You are loo-king ver-ry fine. We have Eng-gel-ish cig-ar-rettes. Here is the key to num-ber nine. . . ."

3

Carlo the bartender had dialed in a ragged Italian band playing American jazz. "Isn't there any Italian music you can get?" the American lady said. "Jazz makes me nervous."

Carlo abandoned the radio and came back behind the bar. "It is the weather," he said. "The sirocco. It is bad for the nerves."

"Yes, I know. When is it going to stop?"

"We must have first the change of moon. Then it will make good weather."

"I thought God made the weather. Don't you people believe in God?"

Carlo tapped the crucifix under his white shirt front and said patiently, "God is for the spirit. For the weather we have the moon."

The American lady lowered her eyes to the level of the long mirror behind Carlo. "What do you have for the heart?" she sighed.

"Dry Martini. Molto secco." He exhibited the vermouth bottle in one hand and the gin in the other.

"I don't think I want anything to drink now. I'll smoke a cigarette."

Carlo replaced the bottles under the bar and clucked his tongue. "Janni!"

Janni dropped his book and hurried over with a match. He held it up before the sulphur had burned off, and the smell made the American lady cough. Carlo's left hand circled deliberately, as though stalking a fly, crashed against Janni's ear and dropped him out of sight. The American lady gasped. She sucked on her cigarette nervously as Carlo bent toward her, smiling, his mustached lip curled over strong white teeth. He held up his lighter.

"Grazie molto."

"Prego."

Janni popped up with a red, swelling ear and a clean ash tray. Carlo nodded and strolled down the length of the bar, fingering its polished surface while the boy watched with an expressionless face. Carlo wiped his finger on a towel, nodded again, and walked out into the hall, humming while he lighted the stump of a cigar he had in his pocket.

Bernhardt came pacing by and stopped, cocking an eyebrow in the direction of the American lady.

"Still inside?"

"Yes, Signore. Drinking, no. Sitting. Since the colazione she sits."

"Has she said anything more about leaving?"

"No, Signore. To me it is a matter of indifference. She is only for reading labels, not for drinking."

Bernhardt spread his palms helplessly and murmured something about the Americans.

Carlo agreed. When it came to a drinking clientele, he would have the English, or the Norwegians. These did not come into the bar to read labels or invent conversation. These drank. A long, steady pull, like a horse from a bucket, beautiful to watch. For the Americans a drink was something to be sat on, to be hatched. It was a sin, he said, that the only party of English in town were stopping at the Bell'Aurora. But perhaps they would come into the bar tonight for drinking. . . .

"Carlo, if she speaks of the autobus for the airport, mention the departure is at six."

"Yes, Signore."

Carlo severed the ash from his cigar, replaced it in his pocket, and came back into the bar. In the ash tray in front of the American lady a dead cigarette reposed, a smear of carmine on the tip.

"Janni!"

Janni scurried over and exchanged the ash tray for a clean one. His ear was still red and looked twice as large as the good one.

"Grazie, Janni," the American lady said.

"Do not mention it — please."

"Parli bene inglese, Janni! Speak some more English."

Janni stared at her, groping for a phrase. He had a shy serious face with intense black eyes and the mouth of an angel by Raphael; the American lady stared back at him with a hungry expression. Janni ducked away and went back to his book, both ears glowing.

The American lady sighed. "Why doesn't he go to school to learn English?" she asked Carlo.

"He is learning to attend the bar. This he will not learn in school."

"But he's so young. He can't be more than twelve."

"He has fifteen years," Carlo said.

"Fifteen! He doesn't look that old at all. You can't tell anything by looks, I suppose."

She held out her passport. "How long ago would you say I had this picture taken?"

Carlo, who had been chopping ice, wiped his hands and took up the passport. The photograph was of a young woman with bold, laughing eyes, like a dancing faun. Thirty years, he thought, flicking a glance at the rouge and powder restoration on the other side of the bar. If not thirty-five. He shrugged.

"How long?" the American lady insisted.

"I would say perhaps before the war."

"*Just* before the war. Oh my, ten years ago. I was twenty-six then, but you wouldn't think it, would you?"

Carlo, who read her age in the passport as forty-seven, agreed that one required some imagination.

"I should have had a new picture taken," she said, "but my husband liked this one so much. It was taken in Vienna, just before the war. So lovely in Vienna, so gay. We were married in a

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country church with a large bougainvillea vine over the door. Do you like bougainvillea?"

Carlo said it was close to his heart. He laid down the passport and went to stand at the terrace windows, watching the slow rain. He was a man of even temper, ordinarily unaffected by the weather, since he had no interests or obligations outside the bar, where brightness and warmth and song were all under his control at the turn of a switch. But today there was a gloomy dampness inside which even the long fluorescent tubes, the polished walnut and tinted mirrors, could not dispel. The American lady, Carlo thought. Since the colazione, sitting there licking her belly like a sick cat, blood of the God!

"Have you ever been in Vienna?"

Carlo came back behind the bar and took up the ice hammer. No, he said, beating the ice viciously into fragments. No, he was not for traveling. He had been to Rome twice and in northern Italy once when he made his military service, but he did not think there was much to see outside of Sicily.

"Vienna was beautiful. I wish I was in Vienna now."

Carlo flashed a smile with all his strong teeth and said that he understood it was only a matter of hours from Rome. At six o'clock there was a bus —

"No, I couldn't go back now. Not without my husband."

Could not the husband be persuaded to join her in Vienna?

"Oh, no. My husband's dead. Dead in the war."

It was triste, Carlo said, gathering up his ice, what the war did.

"It's so stupid. He was to meet me in New York, but then America went in the war and he was called an enemy alien. The most charming, cultured man you ever met, an architect — everyone adored him. He was killed by the bombs."

"Ah, the bombs."

"I wish we had never gone in the war. All that killing, it hasn't made any difference in the world. Has it?"

Carlo admitted that the world appeared to him little changed except that everything cost more and was worth less. He filled the ice bucket and set it down under the bar. The radio began to throb out a Neapolitan love song.

". . . *Cateri, Cateri, pecche me dice sti parole amar-ree.* . . ."

"What is that song?" the American lady said.

"Core 'Ngrato. Canzione Napoletana."

"I know, but what's it about? I can't make out the words."

Carlo curled his mustache cynically and bent his head to listen. He said, "It is a question of the heart. The cruel heart which takes away the life from the other. Then it is all finished, with this one." He shook his head. "There is nothing with the words. It is only to hear the music." He remained leaning against the bar, humming to himself.

When he looked up the American lady was crying. Carlo started for the radio but she said thickly, "Don't shut it off. It's beautiful."

He let it alone, but went to stand at the far end of the bar. The Swiss clock in the reception room struck on the quarter hours and Bernhardt patrolled the corridor, looking in occasionally at Carlo, who shook his head.

4

At five o'clock the English party came in. They were five, two men with two women, who looked to be in their thirties, and a man with white hair and a Malacca stick, who looked several generations removed. The old man stamped in at the head of the party, indicated with his stick the table and the chairs they were to take, and issued a command to the bar.

"Martinis, Carlo! Subito! We've been out five minutes in this lovely weather of yours and we're damp to the bone."

"Benissimo, Signor Tuppen."

Janni raced over to light cigarettes and strew the table with ash trays and plates of salted nuts. Mr. Tuppen rapped him playfully with his stick and said in Italian that he was getting big enough to be hanged soon. The others all made jokes about the fine weather they were missing in England and began to talk about the election. Mr. Tuppen reined the conversation sharply back to Sicily. He had been coming to the island every season for forty-two years, and was a tireless raconteur. Martinis flowed steadily from the bar to the table and were consumed along with the salted nuts and the Tuppen anecdotes, somewhat spiced. Carlo decided that the evening was beginning to promise.

The American lady had turned around on her barstool and was listening to the conversation at the table. She laughed when the others did and followed Tuppen's stories with undissembled interest, but none of the English paid any attention to her. Once when she laughed too shrilly and too long, Tuppen pivoted his venerable white head and examined her briefly with a pained expression, but said nothing.

Someone asked if it was true that Lawrence had lived here in the early twenties. Tuppen said it decidedly was, that D. H. had come shortly after the war. Everyone began to ask about Lawrence, how he behaved toward women, how many he lived with at one time, whether he was really such a peculiar fellow. Tuppen said it was one of the three great misfortunes of his life (the other two being that he had been born too late to see the Queen's jubilee and had lived long enough to see the Labor crowd get in) that he had not known Lawrence. He had seen him about once or twice and had heard a great deal of talk, mostly rubbish. They had made

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Lawrence into something of a god in Sicily, so of course the poor chap had to go in hiding.

Tuppen shifted the conversation to other great names he *had* known intimately in Sicily, but one of the women asked again about Lawrence, and Tuppen repeated, with a touch of exasperation, that he had not known the man.

"I knew Lawrence."

This time everyone turned around and looked at the American lady. Tuppen gave her a glance of frank incredulity and rapped with his stick for Janni.

"He was the most charming, cultured man I've ever met."

The woman who had asked about Lawrence, feeling herself directly addressed, said, "How nice."

Tuppen told Janni to bring another round of the same. The American lady slid off her stool and stopped Janni as he was going back to the bar.

"I believe I'll have a Martini too."

Janni, who understood only a part of what she said, immediately placed a chair for her at the table with the English. She hesitated awkwardly while the English all looked at Tuppen, who sat like a block of stone. Finally one of the younger men jumped up and said, "Have your drink with us, by all means."

The American lady said that she really couldn't, and plopped into the chair. The Englishman presented their names, which she immediately forgot, except that he was Carnes or Barnes or something like that. She said, flushed and excited, "Mr. Lawrence had the villa just above ours, and we used to see him often. I was just a child of course, a young girl. . . . I was studying music in Paris and my family brought me down for the summer season. . . ."

Tuppen commented, to his fingernails, that *the* season in Sicily had always commenced in February.

". . . Mr. Lawrence was fond of the piano and liked to hear me play. He used to say that he and I were the only two foreigners who did any work here. Sometimes he would come strolling by the window as I was playing, and he'd say 'Mind?' and he'd hop right over the sill, into the room. And he'd sit there, not saying a word, with his pipe or his book, perfectly still, like a sweet little boy. . . ."

Tuppen thrust in the observation that sweet little boys did not, as a rule, smoke pipes; but no one heard him. The others clamored for more intimate details about the great man.

". . . I'd look up finally and he'd be gone. Perhaps he'd leave the wild flowers he'd been gathering on the sill. He loved asphodels, you know."

Asphodels, Tuppen informed them kindly, was a lovely name for a weedy herb which no one in his senses ever gathered. He was asked to please hush.

". . . such an unusual man. He never spoke much, but he had a look — oh, such a look. As if he knew — *he knew*, and oh, how it hurt."

Someone asked if it were true that Lawrence was afraid of people.

"Oh, not at all. I often saw him at parties. The season was so gay then, so brilliant, parties everywhere. You can't imagine how it's all changed."

The others commented gloomily on the changing times. They regarded the American lady enviously as one who had known the last of the best.

Carnes (or Barnes) asked if D. H. had really been an untidy chap, shaggy hair and that business.

"Oh my, no. Mr. Lawrence didn't like formal dress particularly, but he was always extremely presentable, clean-shaven, neat —"

Tuppen raised himself halfway across the table and said, in a savage whisper, "He was *what?*"

"I merely said Mr. Lawrence was extremely presentable —"

"And clean-shaven?"

"Why, yes. Of course. Why do you ask?"

Tuppen's eyes gleamed delightedly as he sank back in his chair and folded his hands over his stomach. He said, pounding out each syllable as though he were nailing an enemy to a cross: —

"D. H. Lawrence wore a full, red beard."

Someone else murmured he thought Lawrence did have a beard in the twenties. They all looked at the American lady.

"A beard?" she said.

"Hair on the chin. *Whiskers.*"

"It's funny. I don't remember that."

"A full, red beard. Once you saw it, you never forgot it."

"I think you're mistaken," she laughed.

"I know I'm not. I'll prove it." He got up from the table grimly and headed for the door. One of the men called after him not to bother, that it wasn't important, but Tuppen disappeared shouting for Monsieur Bernhardt. He came back in a few minutes and silently deposited a book on the table, open to a large signed photograph dated 1920.

The English party drained their glasses thoughtfully and consulted watches.

"Janni," Tuppen snapped, "il conto."

"Why don't we all have one more," the American lady said. "Let me buy you all a drink."

The English, struggling into coats and overshoes, said their waiter at the hotel turned into a perfect beast if they were ten minutes late for supper. They shook hands quickly and Tuppen led them off. Monsieur Bernhardt, who had come into the bar in time to witness Tuppen's triumph, now summoned all his strength for a final effort. He mentioned that if Madame desired to detain the airport bus, it was just possible to do so.

But the American lady, not hearing what he said, rose and drifted back to her stool at the bar. She took a piece of ice from the pail and sat there swirling it round and round in her glass, letting it drop and swirling it up again while Carlo looked on, fascinated, the ice hammer gripped in his hand.

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The Atlantic Serial

THE FAR LANDS

by JAMES NORMAN HALL

For thirty years James Norman Hall has made his home in the South Seas. Over the years his imagination has continually been challenged by the question of how the Polynesians ever came to these peaceful but remote islands. From his knowledge of the natives and their legends, he has recreated the epic story of the Tongan Clan, who were lovers of peace and who had gone to sea in their great outrigger canoes in search of the Far Lands promised them by Tané, the god they worshiped. After storm and starvation a remnant of the clan was driven ashore on Kurapo, an island peopled by the Koros, a clan who worshiped war and who would have massacred the survivors were it not for the intervention of their high chief, Vaitangi, who gave the enfeebled strangers sanctuary on the eastern side of the island.

For ten years the Tongans lived in peaceful captivity, building war canoes for the Koros and strictly observing the tabu *which kept the two clans apart. Maui, the hero of the story, the son of Téaro, high chief of the Tongans, is now growing up to be the young leader of his clan. To the festivities which celebrate the wedding of Maui's sister comes Vaitangi with the high chiefs and priests of the Koros. There are feasting and dancing; then on the second day feats of strength and skill between the younger men. In these games Maui easily defeats Uri, proud young nephew of Puaka, the high priest of the Koros and enemy of the Tongans. At this time Maui also comes to know Hina, the pretty granddaughter of Vaitangi. One afternoon he takes her to a secret cave whose entrance he has discovered below the surface of a mountain lake. They plan to meet again, despite the* tabu *which Vaitangi had ordered. At the close of the festivities Vaitangi takes aside the Tongan chief to warn him that the peace cannot last forever between their peoples: his warriors are growing hostile and jealous of the Tongans in their sanctuary.*

10

AFTER Vaitangi's departure Téaro gathered his chiefs at the council house. He paced the room until the last of them had come; then halted before them.

"I bring you such news as none of us could have hoped for," he said. "The decision we now have to make is of the greatest importance. When I have spoken, let each one of you give his opinion as to what our course of action should be." He then told them of the conversation that had taken place between himself, Métua, the high priest, and Vaitangi on the day of the latter's arrival at the Tongan village. "There is no deceit in Vaitangi's nature," he added. "His good will toward us is known to all of you. It was the desire to learn how far he might be willing to extend that good will that led Métua and me to speak as we did.

"In our talk Métua said: 'But we have no ships.' Vaitangi replied: 'But great skill in building them.' Is it not clear that we may now make plans for the future with the consent of the high chief of the Koros? Needless to say, our preparations must be made in secret. Vaitangi wishes to know nothing about them; but what greater encouragement could he have given than the assurance that we shall not be hindered in them?"

One of the chiefs struck his broad knee with his fist. "The way is clear," he said. "It can be done and it shall be done!"

Marama said: "Téaro, let me understand this. You tell us that we may now, secretly, begin the building of ships for ourselves?"

"We may," Téaro replied. "Our preparations will take years to complete, which is the reason why no time should be lost in setting about them. We shall need seven ships — it may be, eight — to carry the numbers we shall have before the last of them is completed. You need not be reminded of the greatness of the task and of how slow our progress will be. We are not, of course, relieved of the work of repairing the war canoes of the Koros and building new ones as they may be required. But this is certain: we can keep from twenty to fifty men steadily at the work of building for ourselves, and the number can be increased from time to time as occasion offers."

They discussed in the greatest detail how and where they should begin their task. There was

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one place and only one where ships could be built with the chances of escaping detection in their favor. The valley to the south of that occupied by the Tongan village was farthest from the Koro settlements; and, owing to the nature of the country inland, it was inaccessible save from the seaward side. The head wall descended in three great steps of sheer rock, down which the river entered a narrow gorge which widened to the valley itself at a point two miles distant from the lagoon. This lower valley was a forest of great trees perfectly suited to be used as hulls for their ships. The trees selected were to be felled at scattered places, the hulls to be hollowed and roughly shaped at the places where they fell, then floated down the river to the place where sheds were to be erected to house the hulls of the vessels while the wood was drying and seasoning. The river for a distance of half a mile inland from the lagoon was wide and deep enough to float the ships when completed; they would have only to widen and deepen the channel at its mouth where it was obstructed by sand. Inland from the beach they would leave a wide strip of jungle intact, which would give perfect concealment from the seaward side. A narrow path, carefully hidden, would be made through this jungle to the building sheds.

"Good!" said Marama. "More than good! When shall this work begin?"

"Not a day shall be lost," Téaro replied. "With Puaka away with the war fleet we could not have a more favorable opportunity for a beginning. It may well be a month or longer before he returns. Until then we can give our full time to it, every man, every boy."

11

Now Vaitangi sent his pleasure canoe to the Tongan village to fetch home Hina and her mother and their servants. The Tongan *ariki* escorted them to the beach and all of the people gathered there to see them go, for Hina's mother was held in great honor by the Tongans. They had not forgotten that she saved Maui's life by suckling him with her own baby daughter at the time when they came to Kurapo. Both she and her child had won the respect and affection of all, and the mothers of the children shed tears at parting as though they had, indeed, been members of one clan. While they were standing on the beach Hina once more reminded Maui of the young ghost terns he was to bring her, and Maui said that he would be waiting for her at the *tabu* tree at the time agreed upon.

When his guests had gone, Téaro gathered his people at the assembly ground and there told them what had been decided at the meeting of the *ariki*. After ten years of waiting, they were to begin building their ships, in which they would proceed once more on the quest for the Far Lands of Maui. He explained all that had taken place at the meeting of the council, and told them of the good will of Vaitangi which made these preparations possible, and of the secrecy with which the work must be done lest their plans should be discovered by Puaka.

The people listened in deep silence as Téaro spoke, and by the expressions upon their faces their thoughts could be read. There were some who remembered only that their lives had been untroubled during the years they had lived on Kurapo. They dreaded the risks that must now be taken and the prospect of setting out once more into the measureless Sea of Kiwa; for, among the Tongans, as in all other clans of our race, were those who lived only from day to day, unwilling to look forward to and prepare for the hazards of the future. But these were few in numbers and they kept their fears to themselves. The others felt their hearts stirred and quickened by Téaro's words. A more fortunate moment, he told them, for beginning their preparations could not have been hoped for, with Puaka and his warriors absent from Kurapo. Two moons might pass before the return of the Koro war fleet and during this time the efforts of all could be given to the work. He then announced how the tasks would be divided, the leaders for each one and the men to be assigned to them.

Afterward, Métua spoke, calling one by one the great names of their ancestors, the heroic men who had led the Tongans from land to land, and it was as though the spirits of those leaders of generations past had assembled there as their names were called. Then Métua said: "I speak in the presence of our noble dead. Mine is the voice you hear, but the words are Tané's own, and this he wishes me to tell you: before ten years have passed we Tongans shall be far from this land, sailing eastward once more, lifting up the sky, horizon beyond horizon, as we approach the promised Homeland. And that promise shall not fail."

The following morning Téaro and his chiefs gathered at the temple to perform the sacred rites which their worship demanded at such a time. Then, led by their priest, they came down into the valley, to the *marae* sacred to the shipbuilders. This was a small temple of terraced stone, fifteen paces long by ten broad. Upon it stood the house where were kept the tools that had long been in readiness for this day; none of them had been used in building ships for the Koro war fleet. Here were the great stone adzes and wedges for felling trees; the smaller ones for shaping and hollowing the hulls of the ships; the scrapers and polishers of shell and coral; the slender sharp-pointed drills for piercing holes; the bone needles for sewing plank to plank as the hulls were built up; tools for carving the high prows and sterns; calking mallets and wedges, and all of the other instruments used in the building of ships. These were carried to the beach, where they were dipped in sea water and the prayers said which

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made them sacred to their uses in Tané's service, each in its kind.

These solemn rites occupied the whole of that day, and at dawn the following morning all of the men, the youths and boys of the clan, went to the valley to the south, to remain there while the work was carried on. High on the central mountain a lookout was stationed day and night, so that the Tongans might know in advance of the return of the Koro war fleet.

12

The Koro war fleet returning home was sighted on the day of the new moon. On the morning of this day, Maui had gone to the mountains to fetch the young ghost terns promised to Hina. With a small basket slung over his shoulder he climbed one of the crags on the opposite side of the lake. Hundreds of baby terns had now hatched and high above the crag the parent birds wheeled back and forth with faint protesting cries as the boy climbed to their nests. Having carefully selected two fledglings he descended to the lake, bathed and refreshed himself, and set out on the trail leading westward.

Upon arriving at the *tabu* tree he found no one there to meet him, but it was then early afternoon and he sat down to wait for Hina. He amused himself for a time by walking past the *tabu* sign as though half expecting it to show some evidence of anger at his bold action; but the streamer, frayed and discolored by wind and weather, hung limp in the still air, as though it were a symbol of the powerlessness of Koro to injure him, son of the high chief of the Tongans.

Having played the game of defying the Koros until he wearied of it, he sat in the shade of the tree and opened the basket to examine the young terns. He set them on the ground between his feet, and fed them with small fish he had brought with him. He stroked the little balls of white down, keeping his glance fixed upon the path winding down to the main village of the Koros, but there was no sign of Hina and the servant who was to come with her. He became drowsy in the still warm air. Returning the birds to the basket he curled up in the fern beside it and was soon asleep.

When he awoke a fresh breeze was blowing, and the fern-covered ridges and the glades of forest land were golden in the light of early evening. He sat up quickly, rubbing the sleep from his eyes. He could see the slender crescent of the new moon shining faintly in the cloudless sky.

It was the day of the second new moon that had shone since Hina had promised to meet him there. She couldn't have forgotten; Maui was certain of that. He again sat down to wait.

Chin in hands, he gazed out over the vast floor of the sea ruffled to the deepest blue by the northeast wind. Presently his attention was fixed upon something far to the north. It was the peak of a sail. Keeping his gaze steadily upon it he saw the ship emerge above the horizon. It was one of the war canoes of the Koros returning home. One by one, others appeared, until there were five in view, looking like toy ships against the great expanse of sea. Maui knew that six had sailed. Perhaps one had been lost; if not that, it might already have reached land while he was sleeping. With a strong breeze the others were coming on fast. He watched until they had disappeared behind a headland on the western side of the island.

What should he do now? He glanced at the basket resting at his feet. He had promised Hina to bring the birds and she had promised to meet him there. But she had failed to keep her promise. Well, then? How often his mother had told him, and his father as well, that he must never doubt the love of Tané for his children and his power to protect them from whatever dangers if their faith was strong and sure. His heart beat fast as he thought of the test of both his faith and his courage that he might now make. Surely, Tané had brought him there to put him to the proof, to learn whether this son of the high chief of the Tongans was worthy to be so. And when he returned safely home, what honor would be his! He could feel the pressure of Taio's strong fingers upon his shoulder and hear his voice saying: "Maui boy! What a leader you will be when the time comes for you to take your father's place!"

He glanced once more at the basket. They were Hina's terns. He had promised to bring them. "A Tongan never fails to keep his word"—Métua himself, the beloved priest of Tané, had taught him that.

The sun had just set and the sky was aflame with the splendor of the afterglow. With this to light him, the boy took up the basket and proceeded, half walking, half running, along the path descending toward the main valley of the Koros.

It was full night when he reached the head wall of the valley; the path here was only a little less steep than the one in the Tongan valley. He descended slowly but without hesitation and at length reached the gently sloping land of the valley floor. The darkness here was intense but he could follow the path by the occasional glimpses of starlit sky above it. Soon he saw the flickering light from smoldering supper fires on the earthen floors of cookhouses behind the first dwellings. All was silent there, which did not surprise him. The people would have gone to the beach to see the arrival of the war fleet.

He felt a growing confidence as he went on. In the darkness he could go where he would, even to the beach itself. There were so many of the Koros that no one would notice him. He would need only to keep in the shadows, away from the flares of torches and the fires lighted on the beach where the war fleet

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would now be at anchor. He felt a thrill of excitement mingled with dread as he thought of Puaka, the priest of Koro. No Tongan boy had ever seen this formidable chief and warrior who showed his contempt for the Tongans by never coming to their valley; but Maui had heard often of his huge size; he towered head and shoulders even above Vaitangi, the high chief.

The boy went more cautiously as he came to the settled part of the valley, but here too the houses were deserted save for a few old people he saw here and there in doorways, too feeble to go with the others to the beach. No one saw him as he moved, as silently as a shadow, along the path. He halted when he reached the assembly ground, which was twice as large as that of the Tongans, covered with turf and bordered by great trees. Skirting the inner end of it he saw before him what could have been no other than the dwelling of Vaitangi, with the smaller houses of his many servants clustered in the groves behind it. A fire was burning in an open space near-by. By its light Maui saw many servants running amongst the houses in a distracted manner. All were women, and they were crying and wailing as they hurried in and out of the chief's house on various errands. Gathering his courage Maui moved closer, standing in the shadows where he had a clear view of the entrance. He searched in vain for a glimpse of Hina or her mother, but a moment later he saw one of their servants who had come with them to the Tongan valley. As she passed near, Maui ran out and seized her by the arm. The woman, who was wailing like the others, halted to stare at him; then seized him by the shoulders to peer into his face.

"Maui!" she exclaimed. "Maui! . . ."

"I've brought the baby terns for Hina," he explained, quickly, thrusting his basket into the woman's hands. "Why didn't she come?"

The woman continued to stare at him as though not believing in his presence.

"Hina? How could the child come when her father has been brought home dead?"

"Dead!"

"Haven't I said it? Killed in battle! . . . Do you know what you have done, you son of Téaro? Run! . . . Hide!"

"Will you give the terns to Hina? I promised them."

The woman stared distractedly at him a moment longer; then she seized the basket and hurried away. But she turned to call back: "Go away from here, boy! *Run*, as I tell you! Keep clear of the path!"

Shocked by the news he had heard and not knowing what to do, Maui ran into the deep gloom of the trees bordering the assembly ground. The horror evident in the woman's voice and manner, as she recognized him, gave him a momentary feeling of panic; but despite her warning, and as though against his will, he proceeded along the path toward the beach. He had gone only a little way when he saw lights approaching. Hiding in a thicket where he had a clear view of the path, he waited. Presently he saw men with torches approaching, followed by eight others carrying a bier upon which lay a body tightly wrapped in white tapa cloth. Behind it came a procession of women, wailing and shrieking and naked to the waist, their hair hanging in disheveled masses over their shoulders. In the light of flares they appeared scarcely human. Their eyes gleamed wildly, their faces were distorted and covered with blood as they moved slowly on, savagely lashing their faces, heads, and their bare breasts and shoulders with goads set with sharks' teeth.

13

MAUI went on, following the path around a rocky spur where the land widened again, and now for the first time he heard a confused clamor of many voices coming from the beach. Fires set widely apart sent their ruddy light far into the gloom of the groves and over the lagoon where the ships of the war fleet were anchored in line close to the beach.

Forgetting his fear in his eagerness to see what was taking place, Maui approached the canoe sheds which stood along the upper slope of the beach. Between two of them was a tree whose great trunk threw a deep shadow on the inland side. Concealing himself behind it, he peered out.

Warriors were crossing the shallows between the ships and the shore, carrying men bound hand and foot and throwing them on the beach like logs of wood. One of them was loosed and dragged to his feet. The crowd drew back, yelling with blood frenzy, as half a dozen warriors armed with short clubs formed a line along the beach, with intervals of ten or fifteen paces between them. The prisoner, a stalwart fellow, stared around him, his eyeballs shining in the firelight. He was to run the length of this line of men, dodging the blows aimed at him. If he succeeded in doing so his life would be spared. He flexed his arms and legs, numbed by long confinement, while the crowd yelled with impatience, urging him to start. Someone gave him a shove which threw him off balance. Leaping to his feet and running and dodging with great skill, he safely passed four young chiefs and was then brought down by a blow that crushed his skull. Now the frantic crowd rushed in, gathering so closely around the murdered man that Maui could not see what was happening. Presently the people drew back and he saw the chief who had killed the prisoner wearing the body as though it were a mantle, his head thrust through a great hole made in his chest. Drums began to beat and the chief leaped and danced and whirled with the bloody corpse until he stood before the war canoe in the center of the anchored line. Of a sudden the drumming stopped as a warrior of gigantic frame appeared on the

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forward fighting-platform of the ship, where he stood waiting as the frenzied yelling died away to silence.

It was Puaka; Maui knew it could be no one else. He was in full battle dress, and his evil face and towering figure looked even more formidable in the flickering light of the fires, his height increased by a war helmet adorned with brilliantly colored feathers. Maui gazed in terror at this priest of Koro whose hands rested upon the haft of a war club that reached to his waist. The warrior who stood facing the priest now lifted the murdered man from his shoulders, withdrawing his head which was drenched with the man's blood. The body, which was thrown to the ground before the prow of the canoe, was the first sacrificial victim killed to honor the return of the fleet.

In a harsh booming voice, Puaka addressed the people, telling them of the triumph of the Koro warriors in this last expedition against their enemies. Six ships had departed and six had returned. Maui heard without grasping the sense of what he heard. To the boy the priest seemed the human embodiment of Koro himself, and he was held to the spot where he stood as though Koro had willed it so. Presently the priest stepped down from the platform, the crowd surged toward him, and when the beach was again cleared Maui saw that rollers had been placed from the canoe sheds to the water's edge. To the ones nearest the water living prisoners had been bound, face up. Now the anchors were drawn up and the ships moved far out on the lagoon until they could scarcely be seen in the darkness. Then, from somewhere on the beach, a drum began to beat, first as a signal of readiness to the distant paddlers, then in a fast steady sequence to time the strokes of their paddles. As the ships emerged from the gloom the prows of each pointed directly to the doorway of its shed. They came seething in, abreast. As they neared the beach the paddlers leaped into the shallows and the bows came crashing down on the bodies of the living victims. Other men joined the paddlers, thronging along the sides of the ships which were rolled up the beach and into the sheds.

So quickly was this done that before he had time to escape Maui found himself in the midst of the crowd, but no one heeded him. He was carried along in the direction of one of the fires.

Desperately he wormed his way out, and had just succeeded in getting clear when he found himself face to face with Uri. The latter halted to stare at him, an expression of amazement and unbelief on his face. He paused just long enough to give Maui a chance to run for his life toward the shelter of the groves. But turning his head, Maui saw that Uri was close behind.

Maui ran on, dodging in and out amongst the deserted dwellings until he came to a well-beaten path which led toward a pit of deepest shade. The wavering lights from the beach barely reached this path; Maui turned into it instinctively and sped toward the deepening gloom ahead. Halting there to glance back for an instant, he saw a shadowy form still following about fifty paces behind. He ran on, stumbling over roots and stones, until he came to a grove of trees whose branches blotted out the faint light of the stars. Feeling his way into it, his hand came in contact with a limb on the level of his head. Clasping it with both hands he swung himself into the tree and climbed on until he was twenty or thirty feet from the ground. There he rested, breathing hard, a hand over his mouth to subdue the sound of his breathing.

He could still hear, faintly, the shouts and cries from the beach, which seemed to deepen the silence around him. The sharp crack of a dead branch below warned him that Uri was somewhere there searching for him. The horror of what he had seen so numbed Maui's heart that he was unable to think, but gradually he became calmer. He realized that he was no longer in the main valley but in what appeared to be a narrow ravine leading off from it. He could stay there no longer. Whatever the risk, he must make his way homeward through the Koro village before the people returned to their houses.

He was about to descend from the tree when he saw lights approaching along the path by which he had reached this place. They became brighter, throwing shafts of light into the tree where he hid. Swiftly and quietly he climbed higher, and as he did so the silence was broken by the deep booming of a drum. He could not tell from what direction it came. It echoed and re-echoed from the mountain walls until all the valley was filled with the sound. Maui climbed higher, and not until he had reached the topmost branches capable of bearing his weight did he realize where he was. The tree was one of the sacred grove surrounding the temple of Koro. Peering through the branches, he found himself looking down upon the flat-topped summit of the temple and not more than a dozen feet above it. Candlenut flares and stone lamps filled with coconut oil were burning there, and by their light he saw, at one end of the high platform, a huge stone image. It was Koro, god of war. In a recess near it stood the great Drum of Koro, so tall that its head was reached by a ladder to a small platform, where now a priest of the temple stood beating the Drum, whose deep throbbing seemed to fill all space.

A moment later the drumming ceased and as the reverberations died away Puaka appeared at the top of the stairway on the far side of the temple. He was no longer dressed as a warrior, but wore the ceremonial robes of the high priest of Koro. Behind him came the temple assistants, and following them, Vaitangi and the Koro *ariki*. Puaka halted, facing the image of the war god, and Vaitangi stood with him there; the lesser chiefs and priests were ranged on either side. No word was spoken. Then came a

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second procession: men, two by two, bearing on their shoulders the mangled bodies of the prisoners that had been crushed beneath the war canoes. Each body was bound to a carrying pole, and they were laid side by side before the altar of Koro.

Maui dared not move; he was barely concealed by the leaves and twigs and smaller branches growing from the limb that supported him which extended over the temple platform scarcely a dozen paces from where Puaka stood, his back toward him. The image of the war god, which faced him, towering above the company gathered there, filled the boy's heart with terror. Koro seemed to be gazing directly at him, and the flickering lights and shadows playing over his evil face gave it a hideous aspect of life. Moved by sheer animal terror — the need to escape that awful scrutiny — and yet not losing the realization of his danger, Maui moved slowly back and turned to descend the tree. As he looked down he saw the upturned face of Uri not three feet below, gazing at him with a smile of ferocious joy. Scarcely knowing what he did, Maui leaped to the temple platform. He fell forward on his hands and knees. As he scrambled to his feet he gave one swift glance toward the figure of Puaka. The priests were in the midst of a chant, but hearing the noise behind them they turned their heads. Maui caught a glimpse of Puaka's face as he ran to the stairway and disappeared.

At dawn the following morning Métua was sitting on a bench outside his dwelling which stood near the Tongan temple. Glancing up, he saw the figure of a boy half-running, half-walking, along the path leading to his house. It was Maui. His face, his bare chest and arms and legs, were scratched and covered with bruises and his waistcloth was soiled and torn. The boy ran to him, falling on his knees before him and burying his face in the priest's lap. Métua laid a hand gently on the boy's head, waiting for him to speak.

14

In the village of the Koros on the morning of Maui's return, Vaitangi gathered his *ariki* from both villages. They knew of the events of the night just ended and they awaited the coming of their priest. All he had done for those worshipers of Tané had been strongly opposed by Puaka. In his heart Vaitangi felt a stern anger toward the Tongans. He had protected them for ten years; and now the son of Téaro, whether through ignorance or the bravado of youth, had violated his friendship. Nothing could have favored Puaka more, or added more to his power at the expense of Vaitangi's, than what had happened.

Now came Puaka from the temple of Koro and took his seat in the council chamber. Vaitangi rose and stood facing his *ariki*.

"I have little to say to you," he began. "I have befriended these Tongans, with the consent and approval of most of you here gathered. You know, further, that Téaro's blood comes from the same source as my own. Through the long history of our race, blood ties have been sacred. We have been taught by our ancestors to remember and respect them. So I have done here, although the Tongans are worshipers of Tané. What matters it to all-powerful Koro that, among the lesser gods, there is one, the least of them, who teaches his followers not to spill blood?

"But what has happened is an offense against Koro himself. This boy, Maui, has defiled his temple. That it was done in ignorance matters nothing. Our priest will speak in Koro's name. What he says must be done shall be done."

Then Puaka spoke, and both his words and manner were otherwise than had been expected by the *ariki*, most of all by Vaitangi himself. He made no attempt to lash them to fury and the lust for revenge, but spoke, rather, in a mocking manner, like one so confident of his power that he could bide his time before displaying it.

"You will remember," he said, "that when these Tongans came to our land I would have shown them no kindness, not even the courtesy granted at times when strangers come from the sea. The reason for this you know: the defiance of Téaro, their high chief, who refused to acknowledge that the power of Koro is greater than that of Tané. Vaitangi upheld them in that defiance, and some of you, the members of his council, upheld Vaitangi. And the Tongans, as though in reward for their defiance, were given lands upon which to live and freedom from any obligation to Koro whose power they defied.

"Vaitangi said that these Tongans would be useful to us. So they have been. I hated them. I still hate them. Would you expect me, high priest of Koro, to feel otherwise toward a clan that refuses to acknowledge his power? Vaitangi has befriended them, and that, too, is to be understood, for, as he has told you, the ties of blood are not to be ignored. The blood in my own veins is less noble than that of Vaitangi. I acknowledge it.

"I am grateful that Vaitangi acknowledges my authority in the matter which now concerns us: the defilement of our sacred temple by the son of the chief who defied Koro himself. Before revealing Koro's will, I ask one question. Let each of you speak in turn, according to his rank. Bearing in mind the nature of the offense committed, what, think you, should the punishment be?"

Puaka turned first to Vaitangi, who said only: "What Koro has willed."

The older members of the council, though secretly blaming Vaitangi for his friendliness toward the Tongans, respected him and were fearful of the power Puaka was gathering to himself. They replied as Vaitangi had done. But the younger *ariki* who

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followed Puaka spoke hotly and eagerly. Some favored an immediate attack upon the Tongans which should not end until all had been killed. Others would have had Téaro, his son, and all members of his family sacrificed to Koro.

When all had spoken, Puaka said: "I now give you Koro's will, in one word, which was three times repeated as I knelt before his altar: *Wait . . . Wait . . . Wait.*

"The meaning of his command is plain," Puaka continued. "In his own good time Koro will make known to me the manner in which these Tongans are to meet their death at our hands, and not one of them shall live after the command is given."

"But what is to be done now?" one of the younger chiefs asked. "Are they to be spared lesser punishment while awaiting the full vengeance of Koro?"

A ferocious smile passed over the face of the priest.

"No," he replied. "Before speaking of that I have this further to say of the punishment to come. Koro said, *Wait!* What he left unsaid is this: Wait until the boy, Maui, is old enough to know what suffering means. Wait until he is chief in his father's place. Wait until his people have further increased in numbers, so that the blood to be spilled may, in some measure, cleanse my temple of the foul sacrilege he has committed there.

"As for the vengeance to be taken now"— Puaka turned to glance at Vaitangi — "our honored high chief will agree, I think, that the Tongans are no longer to be spared from blood sacrifice?"

Vaitangi nodded his head, grimly.

"The first blood spilled shall be that of a Tongan of my own choosing," said Puaka. "Tomorrow — with Vaitangi's permission? — I will myself go to fetch this man." His eyes gleamed in anticipation as he added: "For ten years these lovers of peace have thanked Tané for protecting them. It is time that Koro, and the priest of Koro, should show them that Tané can shed helpless tears of blood in their behalf."

15

It was the morning of the second day since Maui's return from the Koro valley. The shadows of the trees on the assembly ground moved imperceptibly westward, then slowly withdrew until they were pools of deep shade under the midday sun. And still the Tongans waited: in their dooryards, in scattered groups by the river and on the assembly ground. It was midafternoon when a messenger came from the lookout to the north. The Koros were coming by sea around that side of the island. Only one ship was approaching: Vaitangi's pleasure canoe.

Word was quickly passed to the people to clear the assembly ground, but they were to wait near it; then Téaro and his chiefs went to the beach to meet the Koro *ariki*. As the ship approached, three figures only were seen beneath the roof that sheltered the platform reserved for the chiefs. They were Vaitangi, Puaka, and Puaka's nephew, Uri. In addition to the paddlers were thirty fighting men, the priest's bodyguard. They carried their weapons and were in full battle dress, but Puaka wore his robes of office as priest of Koro.

As they came ashore, Téaro and Métua stepped forward to greet them. Puaka made no reply to the ceremonial words of welcome, but Vaitangi said: "Conduct us to your council house." No word was spoken on the way there. They entered the council chamber, and when all were seated servants brought refreshments; but Puaka waved them aside. He glanced at Téaro. "Bring your son to me," he said. Téaro gave the order to one of his men and a moment later Maui appeared. He looked at his father, who indicated that he was to stand before Puaka. The priest stared long at him, then turned to Téaro.

"It is strange that you, a worshiper of Tané, should have a son who so loves the sight of blood," he said. "He belongs to me. I should take him." He turned again to Maui. "You wish to come with me now? Or at a later time?"

The boy made no reply.

"You wish, perhaps, to give me some friend of yours; some older friend whom you love dearly, to honor us at this time? Will you name one to take your place at the altar of Koro?"

Puaka waited, but Maui remained silent.

"You have so many friends. You are thinking: 'Which one most deserves this favor?' I will help you to choose. You have a friend who is a craftsman among the shipwrights, a teacher of the sons of chiefs. He is also, I have been told, a dancer. My nephew, Uri, was honored by this man, who danced before him with great joy. His name is Rangi. Bring him to me."

Maui turned toward his father, a look of despair in his eyes. Téaro would have sent one of his servants to fetch Rangi, but Puaka said, "No!" With outstretched arm he pointed toward the door. "Go, you!" he said to Maui.

The assembly ground lay empty in the golden light of late afternoon. Maui crossed it to his father's house where many were gathered. His mother and grandmother were there, and the servants of the household; and Taio and his family; and Rangi, his wife, and their sons and daughters. Maui went to Rangi and halted before him, but he could not speak. Rangi's son, Ma'o, the most beloved of Maui's friends, said: "What is it, Maui? They wish to see my father?" Still he made no reply until Rangi gently lifted the boy's chin and looked into his face. "It is I?" he said, and Maui nodded. The others watched numbly as they crossed the assembly ground, Rangi's arm around the boy's shoulders. As they approached the council house Puaka and the others there came out and stood before it. Puaka's bodyguard formed in line on

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either side, their spears and war clubs in their hands. The priest had his nephew, Uri, at his side. Maui and Rangi halted before them.

Puaka turned to his nephew. "This is the man who danced before you?" he asked.

"Yes," said Uri, glancing at Maui with a smile of triumph.

"I wish to see this dance," said Puaka. "You honored my nephew when he came here with Vaitangi to the feasts and games. Now you shall honor me. . . . Begin!"

Rangi looked steadily at the priest, showing no trace of fear.

"You refuse?" said Puaka.

Rangi made no reply.

The priest turned to Téaro. "Assemble your people here: all of them, men, women, and children."

This was done. The people gathered silently, forming a wide circle facing the priest. When the last of them had come, he said: "I regret deeply my neglect of you Tongans during these past ten years. I have been guilty of disrespect to Tané, your all-powerful god, not having come before. But Métua, your priest, will intercede for me. I hope to be forgiven.

"This boy, son of your chief, became impatient. He said to himself: 'Why does Puaka, high priest of Koro, never visit my father's people? Surely, he has forgotten us. I myself will go to remind him that we long to see his face.' And so he came. Not finding me at my dwelling, he came to the temple of Koro. He is a Tongan — why should the altar of Koro be sacred to him? And there he found me.

"Then his boldness deserted him; he ran away without speaking to me. But I understood what he wished to tell me. It was this: 'Puaka, why do you neglect my father's people? Ten years we have lived in this land and you have left us in peace. No drop of our blood has ever been spilled in sacrifice. Surely, Koro is not pleased with you. Come, therefore. I, Maui, son of Téaro, remind you of your duties.' . . . And so I have come. It shall be as he wishes."

As Puaka gazed about him the mocking smile was replaced by an expression of pitiless ferocity.

"From this day forth, when the thunder of the great Drum of Koro is heard in our valleys, the summons shall be for one of you! It is Maui who requests it.

"When, at night, you gather in your houses, listening, waiting, not knowing which of your men shall next be chosen by Koro, give thanks to this son of Téaro for the terror in your hearts.

"You mothers, wives, sisters: when the food has been prepared for one who is to come, and you wait, and the hours pass, and he fails to come, then go to the dwelling of your chief and ask for Maui. And tell him this: 'Maui, our father (or brother, or husband) has not come home. His food has long been waiting. Go seek him for us. Surely, he is at the temple of Koro and has forgotten to return.'"

Puaka glanced at Rangi; then he said: "Now you shall know why they will forget to return. . . . Where is the family of this man, this renowned dancer? Let them all step forth from amongst you."

A low murmur of voices was heard as the wife of Rangi and his children, two sons and three small daughters, came forward. They were ordered to stand at a little distance from their father.

Puaka glanced at the leader of his bodyguard. Immediately, three powerful warriors stepped from the line and seized Rangi from behind. With a cry of despair Maui rushed at them, but he was seized, dragged back, and held by others of the guard. Rangi was a man of great strength and broke free from those struggling to hold him. Grasping one by the middle, he threw him over his shoulder and the man fell heavily, stunned for a moment. But others leaped upon Rangi before he could turn to meet them. One stood by, dodging this way and that, waiting his chance during this struggle. In his hand was a pointed, double-edged knife of bamboo. Now, as the others had Rangi helpless for a moment, he sprang in, thrusting the knife into his throat, severing the great artery. Rangi sank to the ground, the blood spurting from the wound.

Cries of grief and rage came from the people and they surged forward, but Métua ran toward them, holding out his arms. He knew, as did the people themselves, that an attack upon the priest of Koro would mean death for all. The others, brought to their senses, halted and fell back. The air was loud with the wails of the women and terrified sobs of the children; but some stood as though struck dumb with horror, watching Puaka's warriors as they bound Rangi's body to a carrying pole. At a command from the priest two of them lifted the body to their shoulders, and with the others surrounding Puaka, his nephew, and the murdered man they moved rapidly toward the beach.

Téaro and his chiefs remained where they were lest the people should yet follow and attack the guard. Vaitangi stood near them. When the others had vanished among the trees he glanced at Téaro, who went to him, and they walked to the far end of the assembly ground. Vaitangi halted and gazed sternly at Téaro.

"For what has happened you have only yourself to blame," he said. "From now on you shall see me here no more, nor any of my family."

He turned to go, but halted to add: "Build your ships! Build swiftly! You have no time to lose!" He then followed the others to the beach.

16

Now came the time long dreaded by the Tongans, when the hatred of the priest of Koro became active against them. They had lived so long under

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Vaitangi's protection that many had come to accept it as assured for the future; but after the death of Rangi they were fully awakened to a sense of the common danger and their best qualities came to the fore. Téaro had told them of Vaitangi's parting message on the day of Rangi's murder; and so, ever conscious of their danger but willingly accepting the risks involved, they proceeded with the building of their ships.

From this time on lookouts were kept on the headlands to the north and south of their valley, and a third inland, at a high and secret place overlooking the western side of the island, so that warnings could be sent of any movement of the Koros in their direction. Thus secure from surprise, Téaro kept half the men of the clan steadily at work felling trees and shaping the hulls for the eight ships that would be needed for carrying his people on their voyage eastward.

Maui was not permitted to resume his place among the shipwrights' apprentices. Téaro hardened his heart against his son and heavy was the punishment he was made to bear. He was kept at the lookout high in the mountains, having as companion one man only who was changed from week to week. From that place, the booming of the great Drum of Koro could be clearly heard announcing the times when important ceremonies which demanded a human sacrifice were to be held at the temple of Koro. It was then Maui's duty to make the long journey down to the Tongan valley, bringing word to his father. No one was permitted to speak with him: neither his mother, nor grandmother, nor his sister Tauhéré, nor any member of the clan. They were ordered by Téaro to turn their backs upon Maui when they saw him coming, and those within the chief's house were compelled to do the same as he entered the dwelling. He could speak only to his father, and these were the words of the message he would bring: —

"The great Drum of Koro has sounded again. I bring you warning so that our people may wait in their houses until they learn who next is to be taken, through my fault, as a sacrifice to the god of war."

Then his father would reply: "They shall wait. The blood of this man, whoever he may be, is upon your head. Get you back, now, to your post."

The weeks and the months passed, and before a year had gone by Maui had come eight times to bring this warning to his father, and among those taken for sacrifice were fathers, or uncles, or older brothers of friends whom he dearly loved. So heavy was this punishment that even those who had felt most bitterly toward Maui now had nothing but compassion for him. He had suffered enough; let his father forgive him as they had forgiven him. Maui's mother and grandmother pleaded in vain with Téaro. Not until a full year had passed was the punishment lifted.

His father then received him as though nothing had happened, saying no word of his punishment. His heart smote him at having put the boy to so cruel a trial and he watched closely for signs of its effect upon him. But, save that Maui now seemed older than his thirteen years, and rarely smiled, and said little, there was nothing to show that he had not borne himself with the patience and courage expected of the son of the high chief. He was then sent to live with Métua at the temple of Tané, for the time had come when he was to be under the instruction of the priest that he might fit himself for the high duties of later years. Téaro waited anxiously for what Métua would report, but two weeks passed before the priest came to see him. The two men met in the council house and talked until a late hour.

"Have no fears for him," the priest said. "He has borne his punishment with a strength beyond what might have been expected in a boy of his years."

"He feels no bitterness toward me?" Téaro asked.

"None," said Métua. "He believes that his punishment was fully deserved, but the sense of guilt has been planted deeply in his heart."

"That is something that time will cure," said Téaro. "What weakness do you see in him?"

"Fear," said Métua. "Fear of Koro and dread of his power."

"He has told you of this?"

The priest shook his head. "He reveals it in his dreams. I have heard him cry out, in the night, not once — several times. In the dreams he is again in the temple of Koro, powerless to move or to turn his eyes from the face of the huge figure of the god who stands there. Koro is the mighty one, with a power of evil exceeding that of Tané for good."

Téaro was deeply concerned. He paced the council chamber for some time before again speaking to the priest.

"How is this to be conquered?" he asked. "What he fears in his dreams he will fear when awake."

"You trust me in this matter?" the priest asked.

"I do," said Téaro. "Who better than yourself is fitted to deal with it?"

"Then set your mind at rest," Métua replied. "Maui will conquer his fear, though the time may be long. Let him take his place once more with the other apprentices at work on his ships, for there his heart is."

"That he shall do," said Téaro.

17

EACH year Tongan men were taken by Puaka to be sacrificed on the altar to Koro. Although the Tongans were kept in complete ignorance of all happenings in the Koro valleys, they knew that Puaka was now in control of those people. Never again did Vaitangi return to their valley, nor any of his servants or members of his household. Puaka

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himself came but rarely. The common people were not even noticed by him, and he treated the *ariki* either with mocking contempt or with a kind of cold fury, letting them know unmistakably that he was now their master, whose commands were to be instantly obeyed. More often his orders were brought by one of the younger Koro chiefs. Neither Puaka nor any of his messengers ever went beyond the Tongan village, and they returned as they had come, either by sea, around the northern side of the island, or by the path leading inland across the plateaus and the mountains. In this wise four years passed.

The Tongans were thus convinced that Puaka could have no suspicion of the building of the ships, but well they knew that his plans for taking full vengeance upon them were delayed only, not abandoned, and the dark threat of that vengeance hung over them constantly. Never did Téaro forget the words of Vaitangi's parting message: "Build your ships! Build swiftly! You have no time to lose!" Under his direction the Tongans worked as never before, and, when Maui was just eighteen, seven ships were nearing completion. The prow and stern pieces and the planking for the eighth ship had already been shaped. The hewing down of the last tree needed was under way, and the Tongans knew that if their good fortune held, they would be ready for escape before another three months had passed. At this time Puaka had recently left Kurapo with the war fleet on another expedition against his enemies on the islands to the north. This gave the Tongans an opportunity they could not have dreamed of, and Téaro assured them that, if the war fleet should be absent for three months, as often happened, the Tongans, before Puaka returned, would be far out at sea and safe from all pursuit.

Excepting the very old, all of the clan, both men and women, worked on the ships. Some of the women were collecting and preparing the thick, viscous sap of the breadfruit tree used for calking the ships; others, under the direction of the master craftsmen, were plaiting the double- and triple-ply sails of pandanus leaf, carefully rolling those to be used as spare sails and wrapping them in fold after fold of tapa cloth made waterproof, for stowage.

Within the long open-sided sheds stood the twin hulls for each ship, shored up at the exact distance to the fraction of an inch, one from the other, and men were at work fitting to the hulls, fore and aft, the great crossbeams that were to hold them securely together. Of all their tasks there was none of greater importance or requiring greater skill than this, for these crossbeams with their lashings must be so strong, so firmly bound to the hulls, as to be able to meet all the stresses of wind and sea when the ships, loaded with their human freight, were under way, the twin hulls straining and pulling one against the other. Here the strongest men were at work, under the direction of master shipwrights who watched each turn, cross-lacing, and knot made in the ropes of sennit lashing beams to hulls. Sweat streamed from the faces and down the bare breasts and backs of the men engaged in this task.

At another shed men were building up from the hulls the thick, beveled-edge planking, each plank so perfectly shaped and smoothed that the seams between them could scarcely be detected, but as each one was set in place the beveled edges were calked with the sap from the breadfruit tree. The men lashing them to the hulls worked opposite one another, one row within, the other outside the ships, chanting as they worked: —

> Thread it from inside; it goes outside,
> Thread it from outside; it comes inside.
> Tie it firmly! Bind it fast!

Of all this busy throng, none were happier, or worked with greater zest, than the younger apprentices — boys of ten, twelve, and fourteen years. Some acted as tool sharpeners; others swarmed over the ships already completed or nearing completion, scraping, smoothing, oiling, polishing: the masts, the beautifully carved prows and sterns, thwarts, paddles, steering oars, bailing scoops, and the great hulls themselves, eager to bring to the last degree of perfection in workmanship the beautiful ships which their fathers and uncles and older brothers had built. They chattered amongst themselves as they worked, and when they saw Téaro or Maui or one of the other *ariki* watching them approvingly, their hearts swelled with pride.

But woe was in store for the Tongans. Téaro had spent the morning and the early afternoon supervising the work at the sheds. About mid-afternoon he went into the valley where men were felling the last tree needed for the eighth ship. He had not believed that the tree could be felled that day; but the men had worked without rest, hoping to bring him the happy news that it was down, the trunk trimmed and ready to be floated down the river to the sheds. Because of the thick undergrowth, Téaro could not see the tree as he approached, nor did the men suspect that he was near.

Of a sudden the hewers gave a shout of joy. The great trunk trembled, leaned, and came crashing to earth, with a shattering and splintering of limbs and branches. It was not until some time afterward that the men found the body of their chief crushed to death beneath it.

Seven days were spent in mourning the death of Téaro. The people were dazed, numbed in spirit. They sat in their dooryards, or in groups on the assembly ground, scarcely believing that they could have lost their high chief at the time when they were so near to the end of their preparations for escape, when his leadership was so urgently needed. Maui was little seen during the period of mourning. He remained in his father's dwelling, apart from the other members of his family.

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On the evening of the seventh day, Maui mounted the path to the temple, where he found Métua awaiting him; the priest was seated in the grassy court before the eastern side of the temple.

"I expected you, Maui," said Métua. "I know what you have come to tell me."

Maui glanced at the priest. "You know?" he said. "Métua, how is that possible? What I have to confess has been hidden in my heart since boyhood. I have scarcely dared to acknowledge it even to myself."

"Nevertheless, I know," said Métua, "but I would hear it from your own lips. Speak now, freely, openly, keeping nothing back."

Maui then unburdened his heart. Long was the telling. He began with the afternoon in boyhood when he had taken the two baby terns as far as the *tabu* tree where Hina was to have met him, and went on through the events of that evening when he had witnessed the killing of the prisoners brought home by the war fleet and had, later, unknowingly, entered the temple of Koro and had found himself facing the awful figure of the god himself. "Métua, I felt then, looking into that evil face, that we Tongans were doomed: my father, myself, and all of our people. It was as though Koro himself stood there, not an image made in his likeness. The fear of him and the sense of our powerlessness against him have been buried in my heart from that night to this. I have struggled in vain to conquer this fear. How, then, can I be worthy to take my father's place?"

Métua did not reply for some time; then he said: "Maui, now that you have spoken freely and for the first time, do you not feel that a great burden has been lifted from your spirit?"

"Yes, I feel that," Maui replied.

"You have borne it alone too long, my son."

"How could it have been otherwise?" the young man replied. "Could I confess, even to you, that I, the son of Téaro, believed in Koro and his power for evil rather than the love of Tané as the greater force? I felt that I was lost, unworthy of my blood, unworthy of even the lowest place as a Tongan."

"And you believed that Tané himself had turned his face against you?"

"That above all, for when I prayed to him I received no reply. The fear in my heart was as great as before."

"You kept your secret hidden, as you thought, from me. Who should intercede for you if not the priest of Tané?"

"It was shame, Métua. How could I speak? Tell me this: was it Koro himself that I saw in that great image?"

"It seemed so to you?"

"Yes."

"You were then a child, my son; a boy of twelve years. Why do we Tongans have no image of Tané in our temple? Because nothing fashioned by human hands could truly represent the spirit of love. But the spirit of evil can be shown, for it comes from the evil in the hearts of men themselves."

"Then Koro has no reality save in the hearts of men?" Maui asked.

"No, Maui. The image made to represent him has no power save for those who worship it. But Koro, the spirit of evil, is as real as Tané himself, and he has great power to harm us. But with Tané's help men can conquer their fear that the power of evil is greater than the power of love. The time is at hand when you yourself will conquer it, once and for all."

"May Tané grant it!"

"Wait here," said Métua, rising to his feet. "Whether or no you are to be chosen to lead our people in your father's place is hidden even from the priest of Tané, but his will concerning you shall soon be known."

Métua vanished among the trees within the courtyard of the temple. An hour passed and still Maui waited. The waning moon was just rising as the priest returned. He took Maui's hand and they walked to the rocky promontory where lagoon and sea lay outspread below them. Métua stood in silence for a moment, looking far out over the lonely sea. Then, as though speaking in the very presence of Tané, he said: "Our loving Father, Thou seest us, Thy priest, and Maui, son of Téaro, whose ancestors for generations have led us eastward toward our distant Homeland. If this young man is worthy of leadership; if it be Thy will that he should take his father's place, I pray Thou wilt make it known to him."

They stood waiting, with bowed heads. Presently, in the profound stillness of the night, they heard, as though coming from an infinite distance, the clear call of Maui-the-Peaceful. Maui sank to his knees, his face hidden in his hands, his heart filled with joy and gratitude. A moment later the call was heard once more, the very ghost of sound, coming from horizons beyond horizons eastward, over the measureless Sea of Kiwa.

(*To be continued*)

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Books and Men

Few American authors of our time have had such critical acclaim and so little popular success as Nathanael West. Now, ten years after his death in an automobile accident, the curious, original vitality of two of his books, Miss Lonelyhearts *and* The Day of the Locust, *is still making itself felt. The latter title, described by some critics as the best novel to come out of Hollywood, has just been reissued in the New Classics Series by the New Directions Press.* RICHARD B. GEHMAN *has drawn from his Introduction the following account of West and his work.*

NATHANAEL WEST: A NOVELIST APART

by RICHARD B. GEHMAN

1

NATHANAEL WEST, who died in 1940 at the age of thirty-six, published four curious, highly original novels during the thirties, of which the second, *Miss Lonelyhearts*, and the fourth, *The Day of the Locust* (both in the New Directions New Classics series), are generally considered the most likely to survive. The others, *The Dream Life of Balso Snell* (the first) and *A Cool Million*, are no longer in print, but they command some attention if only because the body of West's work was so unlike that of any other important American writing of that period. Like some of his friends — James T. Farrell, Erskine Caldwell, Edward Newhouse, Josephine Herbst — West wrote tough-minded novels of social protest, but he stood a little apart from them in philosophy and in the climate and character of his novels. He too deplored the emptiness of twentieth-century life in the United States, but he chose to depict that life in terms not of people who were consciously involved in a struggle, but of those who were unconsciously trapped — people who were, in their blindness, so tragic as to be true comic figures.

West's contemporaries were realists; he was a kind of superrealist. He often used enormous incongruities to make his points, which gave him a kinship with French writers of the school of Rimbaud and with the later *surréalistes;* but instead of documenting his perceptions with magnifying-glass clarity, he preferred to distill them into images and situations painfully barren of minutiae. He was an extreme pessimist, which may have been the reason why he never reached a wide audience while he was alive. His publishing history was a bitter farce such as he might have dreamed up. *The Dream Life of Balso Snell*, printed by a small *avant-garde* firm, was noticed only in the little magazines; *Miss Lonelyhearts* was published by Liveright only a few weeks before the firm went out of business; *A Cool Million*, introduced by Covici-Friede, went rapidly to the remainder tables; and *The Day of the Locust* (Random House) sold only about 1480 copies.

Critics seemed unable to be objective when reviewing West's work; they were either wildly enthusiastic or scathing in their scorn, and many went out of their way to chastise him for his "bad taste." In a letter to F. Scott Fitzgerald written shortly after publication of *The Day of the Locust*, West said, "So far the box score stands: Good reviews — fifteen per cent, bad reviews — twenty-five per cent, brutal personal attacks — sixty per cent." That was not self-pity; it was the remark of a man who knew he was apart, a crystallized recognition of his place in the literary world of his day.

West began cultivating his detachment at an early age. Possibly it isn't significant that one of his sisters recalls that as a boy he trained his bull terrier to bite anyone who came into the room while the young master was reading; but it is informative to consider that of all the people who knew him well — and his circle encompassed some of the most sensitive, active literary minds of the time — none, with the exception of members of his immediate family and S. J. Perelman (his college classmate and later his brother-in-law), claim to have understood him fully.

In *The Day of the Locust* West described Tod Hackett as "a very complicated young man with a whole set of personalities, one inside the other like a nest of Chinese boxes," and so the author himself seemed to those around him. No one could satisfactorily explain the many clashing elements in his nature and interests. He despised military men, yet was an authority on armies and strategies from the time of Caesar on ("When he took out a girl, he sometimes spent the evening telling her about some battle of Napoleon's," one friend remembers); he regarded organized religion as a hoax, but was on intimate terms with the structure,

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organization, and financial condition of the Catholic Church. He was tall, awkward, and disarming in appearance, but he dressed with excessive propriety in Brooks Brothers clothes and traveled with an incredible collection of trick luggage. He had an acute feeling for words, but couldn't spell; he hated business and workaday occupations, but was successful as a hotel clerk for several years.

Next to writing, hunting was his main interest, so much so that it constantly impinged upon his work, as evinced by his liberal use of references and metaphors in *The Day of the Locust.* Even in his poverty-stricken days in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, while working on his third book and trying unsuccessfully to support himself by selling short stories, he spent inordinate amounts on dogs and hunting equipment; later, in Hollywood, he and his friend Stanley Rose, the bookseller, went hunting regularly in a station wagon equipped with every conceivable device for a huntsman's convenience, including secret compartments for illegal game. Josephine Herbst, who knew him well, has suggested that hunting assumed such importance in his life because it was a way of finding an uncomplicated kinship with rural people — he got on very well with his neighbors in Bucks County — who were not afflicted with the frustrated desires and guilts indigenous to the sophisticated world in which he customarily traveled.

2

West was born in New York in 1904, the son of a prosperous building contractor. He went to public schools and upon graduation from DeWitt Clinton High matriculated at Tufts, stayed a year, then transferred to Brown, where he fell in with a group of young literary aspirants that included I. J. Kapstein, Quentin Reynolds, and S. J. Perelman (the last was perhaps his closest friend and strongest contemporary influence; his shadow can be detected in *A Cool Million* in particular).

West's literary efforts at Brown were confined to satirical verse in a school literary magazine. Upon graduation the yearbook said of him, "He seems a bit eccentric at times, a characteristic of all geniuses." Late in 1924, he joined the crowds of young American would-be Bohemians drifting to Paris, but he evidently didn't share the wide-eyed wonder of that hopeful horde; he was, as usual, a little detached. Years later, in a partly autobiographical short story, first called *The Fake* and later *L'Affaire Beano,* he wrote:—

"'In order to be an artist one has to live like one.' We know now that this is nonsense, but in Paris in '25 and '26 we didn't know it. 'Artists are crazy' is another statement from the same credo. Of course all these ideas were foisted on us by the non-artists, but we didn't realize it then.

"By the time I got to Paris, the business of being an artist had grown quite difficult. Aside from the fact that you were actually expected to create, the jury had been changed. It no longer consisted of the tourists and the folks back home, but of your fellow artists. They were the ones who decided on the authenticity of your madness. Long hair and a rapt look wouldn't get you to first base. You had to have something new on the ball. Even dirt and sandals and calling Sargent a lousy painter was not enough. You had to be an original. Things were a good deal less innocent than they had been, and much more desperate.

"When I got to Montparnasse, all the obvious roles had either been dropped or were being played by experts. But I made a lucky hit. Instead of trying for strangeness, I formalized and exaggerated the costume of a bond salesman. I wore carefully pressed Brooks Brothers clothing, sober but rich ties, and carried gloves and a tightly-rolled umbrella. My manners were elaborate and I professed great horror at the slightest breach of the conventional. It was a success. I was asked to all the parties."

West's parents began pleading with him to return, but he ignored them and stayed on even after his money ran out. He later told a friend, the screen writer Wells Root, that at one time his only presentable garment was a tremendous plaid overcoat. "He grew a flowing red beard and became," Root later reported, "something of a character in the Latin Quarter, striding up and down in the red beard and the long plaid coat which, of necessity, he never removed indoors or out."

West remained in Paris nearly two years, and managed to finish most of *Balso Snell* there, but finally succumbed to his parents' entreaties. He took a job as manager of Kenmore Hall, an East 23rd Street hotel owned then by one of his uncles, and after a year or so moved uptown to the Sutton, a rather more elaborate residential establishment on East 56th Street. *Balso* did not attract much attention when it was published, but West immediately set to work in his spare time on *Miss Lonelyhearts.* Parts of its first draft were published in 1932 in the second series of William Carlos Williams's magazine, *Contact;* West and Robert McAlmon appeared on the masthead as associate editors.

If it hadn't been for two friends, West might have remained a hotel clerk indefinitely; although he was not fond of the job, it at least offered a steady income, and there wasn't much else he could do at a comparable salary. But he was continually fretting over his slow progress on *Miss Lonelyhearts:* by 1932 he had torn up five different versions and was patiently going into a sixth. It was clear that he might never finish it unless he could devote all his time to writing — and that seemed impossible until Josephine Herbst and John Herrmann, who had been the first New York writers to settle in

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Bucks County, Pennsylvania, suggested that he might be able to live less expensively there in the country. He took what little money he had saved, quit the Sutton, and went to stay at Warford House, a tiny hotel in Frenchtown, New Jersey, just across the river from the Pennsylvania land on which the exiled New Yorkers were beginning to establish their small colony. He finished his book there within a few months.

The unfavorable reviews of *Miss Lonelyhearts* were vituperative in the extreme. Fortunately, they were far outnumbered by the favorable notices, so much so that West decided to take up permanent residence in Bucks County and devote all his time to writing. That was when he began *A Cool Million*, interrupting it from time to time to work on the ill-fated short stories, none of which ever saw print. *A Cool Million* finally appeared and, almost simultaneously, died. His money ran lower and lower, and when *Miss Lonelyhearts* was bought as a film property by 20th-Century Fox, West followed his book to Hollywood. (He never worked on the script. When it finally appeared as a picture, its title had been changed to *Advice to the Lovelorn*, and it had been made into a cops-and-robbers film starring Lee Tracy. The producers declared, truthfully, "The pictorial narrative has only the basic idea of the book.")

In Hollywood, he worked first on "B" western and gangster pictures, and later graduated, so to speak, to larger studios, notably RKO. He collaborated on a number of screen originals with Boris Ingster, who had worked with Eisenstein, and was given screen credit on several pictures which were fairly successful at the box office, among them *I Stole a Million* and *Five Came Back*.

In 1939 he met Eileen McKenney, who was working in the Walt Disney studios (she will be remembered as the heroine of *My Sister Eileen*, by Ruth McKenney, a book which achieved wide popularity as a play and a motion picture). They were married in April, 1940, and went on a three-month trip to the Oregon woods, where West blocked out plans for a fifth novel, which he hoped to begin upon their return to California (if he ever put any of this book on paper, he never mentioned it to friends; apparently he never got further than the planning stage). Late in December of that year he and his bride went to Mexico on a hunting trip. On the 22nd, as they were driving back to Hollywood, their station wagon collided with an automobile at a crossroads near El Centro, California. Eileen was killed instantly, and West died on the way to the hospital.

3

Ever since the rise of the motion picture industry, it has become fashionable in some circles to contend that as soon as a writer begins working for the studios, his "serious" output suffers or somehow becomes suspect. Literary history is well populated with writers of real stature who hacked for a living, but for some obscure reason some of the more fastidious — or jealous — critics have continued to insist that film writing is more "harmful" and less respectable than, say, working for the pulps or slicks.

West inevitably came in for criticism of this kind. The closest he came to answering it was in this extract from a letter to Edmund Wilson: "I once tried to work seriously at my craft but was absolutely unable to make even the beginning of a living. At the end of three years and two books I had made the total of $780 gross. So it wasn't a matter of making a sacrifice, which I was willing enough to make and will still be willing, but just a clear cut impossibility. . . . I haven't given up, however, by a long shot, and although it may sound strange, am not even discouraged. I have a new book blocked out and have managed to save a little money so that about Christmas time I think I may be able to knock off again and make another attempt. It is for this reason that I am grateful rather than angry at the nice deep mud-lined rut in which I find myself at the moment. The world outside doesn't make it possible for me to even hope to earn a living writing, while here the pay is large (it isn't as large as people think, however) enough for me to have three or four months off every year. . . ."

The Day of the Locust was completed between studio assignments. If it was less perfect in form and structure than *Miss Lonelyhearts*, it was also more ambitious and showed marked progress in West's thinking and in his approach toward maturity as a writer. *Balso* was an inverted book, a young man's intellectual parlor trick performed chiefly for his own amusement and that of those inner-circle friends he permitted to watch. *Miss Lonelyhearts* and, to a lesser extent, *A Cool Million* were highly colored by West's personal feelings of despair for his characters and his pessimistic conviction that life is one hell of a mess.

Five years elapsed between the third and fourth novels, and when *The Day of the Locust* finally came out, it was apparent that West had learned to let his characters and scenes make their own points without his intrusion: the angry crusader's sword became the brush of an artist, without losing its original sharpness. For this reason alone he stands apart from most of the other Americans who were writing in the thirties, and for this reason his writing is far more likely to stick with us. *The Day of the Locust* has been called "the best book to come out of Hollywood," but while it certainly is that, it is not primarily a novel about that stucco haven of the queer and diseased. West used Hollywood as a microcosm. It was peculiarly fitted to his needs because, as other writers since have discovered,

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everything that is wrong with life in the United States is to be found there in rare purity, and because the unreality of the business of making pictures seemed a most proper setting for his "half-world."

Some Hollywood film people who have read the book claim angrily that it does not depict the real Hollywood; West never intended that it should. The people who live in its pages are not those who are foisting the mammoth Hollywood hoax on the public; only one "successful" person is shown (the writer, Claude Estee), and he is discovered to be as unhappy, basically, as the poor souls who captured West's attention.

West's first thought when planning the novel was to base it on the true story of a California soldier of fortune who had been implicated in a locally famous murder case. With this man as a model, he created a character of his own, a renegade who proposed to get rich by taking parties of sensation-starved, bored, and hopeless *Angelenos* on private cruises. The book was to tell of the adventures of an oddly assorted group who went on one of these trips: a family of Eskimos, a child actor and his mother, a dwarf bookie, a seven-foot Lesbian who had to shave every day, a broken-down vaudeville clown and his talentless daughter who aspired to screen stardom, a woman whose hobby was funeral arrangements, and a film writer who kept a life-sized rubber horse at the bottom of his swimming pool — the sort of people, it is not in the least exaggerating to say, that one might encounter in front of Schwab's on any given day.

As West's thinking progressed, he either lost interest in the impresario or decided that he was not fitted for his purposes; at any rate, he shifted the emphasis to Homer Simpson, the inarticulate hotel bookkeeper from Wayneville, Iowa, and Tod Hackett, the young man from the Yale School of Fine Arts. Much of the story is seen through Tod's eyes, but Homer is unquestionably the central character, for it is he who illustrates West's principal theme.

When first submitted to a publisher, the story was partially told in the first person by Claude Estee, but upon the advice of his editors West made changes so that it is now entirely in the third. It is episodic in structure but panoramic in form: appropriately enough, it in some ways resembles a motion picture — the early scenes are leisurely, fading in and out as though the writer were turning his mind upon them like a camera, and then, as the characters come more and more into focus, becoming tighter, faster, and more merciless.

West first called the manuscript "The Cheated," and the atmosphere of cheating and pretense rises from the pages like a stench. None of the people, enslaved in lives they loathe, can safely resign themselves to reality; all must pretend to be someone else (Faye Greener imagines herself a great star; Claude Estee likes to believe he has a round belly like a Southern colonel, when in reality he is "a dried up little man with the rubbed features and stooped shoulders of a postal clerk"). To equip their illusions further, they resort to artificial luxury in their dwellings, and for emotional satisfaction they turn to movies (where boy and girl live and love ideally, chastely) — the richer, sated ones to pornography — or to cockfights.

At one point West speaks of his people as "masqueraders." This is the key to the book. "All their lives," he says, "they had slaved at some dull labor . . . saving their pennies and dreaming of the leisure that would be theirs when they had enough" — but the trouble was that once they reached the promised land, California, they realized that the never ending, enervating sunshine wasn't enough; that it was possible to get too much orange juice; that one wave at the seashore wasn't any bigger or more violent than the next; that the planes at the Glendale airport never did anything but take off and land. Finally "they realize that they've been tricked and burn with resentment." They know at last, West is saying, that life is nothing but a cheap Mardi Gras devised by the devil, and that they are pitiful amateurs in an unfunny comic opera. They can only find solace, justification, even ecstasy, in the kind of mob violence that ends this upsetting book.

West's message is clear: the human tinder that he writes about is best suited to kindle authoritarianism or wild mob rule. It should have been evident when he first wrote the book that he was a reflector as well as a prophet, but the ironical part was that nobody seemed particularly frightened or even interested enough to pause for objective reflection. Although first-rate writers and critics praised his work highly, West remained for a long time a writer without an audience.

In 1939 he wrote George Milburn, ". . . all my books always fall between the different schools of writing. The radical press, although I consider myself on their side, doesn't like my particular kind of joking, and think it even fascist sometimes, and the literature boys, whom I detest, detest me in turn. The highbrow press finds that I avoid the big, significant things and the lending library touts in the daily press think me shocking and what, in the novels of Michael Arlen, is called 'bad hat.' The proof of all this is that I've never had the same publisher twice — once bitten, etc. — because there is nothing to root for in my work and what is even worse, no rooters."

Today West is at last getting just recognition for his special, remarkable talent; more and more rooters, ten years after his death, are helping his reputation to come into its own. Ten years after his death: that is the final ironic, tragic, Westian joke.

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Bookshelf

THE *Peripatetic Reviewer*

BY EDWARD WEEKS

Our small cottage on the shore north of Boston is overshadowed by oak and beech, three acres of woods seemingly as remote as a camp in Maine. The windows of my workroom carry the eye south and west into green glades where the boles of the trees are splotched and whitened by the shafts of sunlight. Here in quiet I do my reading and, when troubled, my reflecting about the *Atlantic's* policy.

Here, less than five years ago, I wrote an editorial entitled "The Open Heart," in which I gave a few instances of that magnificent unanimity which drew us together after Pearl Harbor. I ended it with these words: "We are speaking of the open heart. I don't say this is the way to live, this anguish, this uprooting, this cry of return. I say that while we had to we lived with the open heart — and with a sympathy for others that makes us a great people. See that in our hurry to renew our privacy we do not close that heart too soon."

Now it seems we are all heading for trouble again. For the past fortnight my eyes have winced at the too familiar photographs of the first wounded, the infantry caught up in retreat as they were at Château-Thierry and Bataan, the transports pulling out as the wives watched. For the third time and so soon. I look at my fifteen-year-old with that inexpressible dread of every parent, and I ask myself, "Did it have to be this way?"

The test in Korea came just as Washington was recovering from the violence and infamy of the McCarthy attack. As James Reston said, "It has made the nation see how it must live in order to survive." I believe Stalin's Intelligence has small concept of the potential of this people when aroused. I believe the time has come when we must live with ourselves again instead of in divided camps.

But there are aspects of the McCarthy terror which we had better remember, things we should be ashamed to do again, things we must do better.

1. Hereafter let us avoid Assassination by Guesswork. When McCarthy, behind his Senatorial immunity, called Owen Lattimore "the top Russian espionage agent in the United States," he was doing just that: he was assassinating a man's character by guesswork. That is, I think, the most infamous abuse of Senatorial immunity I can remember.

The charge was baseless, as the Senator soon discovered, but the infamy spread to those who believe what they read in the headlines. "Look at him," said the man next to me in the smoking car as he pointed to Lattimore's picture, "he looks just like a Communist!"

Owen Lattimore has worked hard to procure the knowledge he possesses of China and of those remote borderlands between China and Russia. He grew up as a boy in China and so learned to speak the tongue. In his twenties he followed the ancient caravan routes across Mongolia and into Turkestan, and his first two books, *The Desert Road to Turkestan* and *High Tartary*, were written with an understanding of the Chinese people and with a knowledge of their past and present which established a new high in Sino-American scholarship.

Throughout his career, he has believed in the Open Door policy for China. In the early 1940s it was his hope, as it was that of many Americans, that the country could be unified under Chiang Kai-shek. Last January in the *Atlantic* he wrote: "The Kuomintang, under the increasingly jealous and narrow leadership of Chiang, put up the worst possible defense of *a cause that was originally good and should have won.*" He could not fail to detect the increasing corruption in Nationalist China; in this he was not alone — ask any American who flew the Hump. The dangers resulting from this corruption he was one of the first to report, and report accurately. He also reported the growing power of the Communists in the Northwest. We accuse the Politburo of telling Stalin only what Stalin wants to hear. It seems to me infuriating that Americans should try to make Mr. Lattimore the scapegoat because he told the unwelcome truth.

2. The Non-Retracting Press. When McCarthy made his accusation, the press in Boston splashed Lattimore's name in big type on the front page. But only the *Christian Science Monitor* thought it important to mention Lattimore by name when, in July, the Subcommittee exonerated him in a report; the others didn't even bother to print the news that he had been given a clean bill of health in the Minority Report of Senator Lodge. I think this is a

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poor showing in a country which prides itself on fair play. Lattimore has been a target of evil slander, and the country deserves to hear of his vindication. The Washington *Post*, which followed the hearings day by day with scrupulous checking of detail, set an admirable example, and in the aftermath the New York *Times* gave a very fair résumé of the Committee reports. Arthur Krock in his column for July 11 paid Lattimore a fine tribute for the authority and correctness of his views on Korea; and in the later analysis by the *Times* of the Committee report, the exoneration of Lattimore, Jessup, and Service was quoted at length. But of how many other metropolitan dailies was this true?

3. The Reliability of ex-Communists. I should like to see us judge American character by the old standards, not by the twisted testimony of renegade Communists. The discipline of the Communist Party is not conducive to truthtelling. Louis Budenz joined the C.P. at the age of forty-four, and worked for it for ten years. He had a new book which was in proof at the time he was asked to testify against Lattimore, and galley proofs of the book had actually been distributed to some reviewers. One critic went through the text painstakingly to see if there was any reference to Lattimore. There was not a word, which I take to be the clearest indication in a book of many accusations that Budenz had not thought of accusing Lattimore of anything when he wrote his text. But after Budenz had been called to the witness stand, the two performances had to gee, and so his publisher allowed him to insert on page 265 the statement that "Owen J. Lattimore" served as adviser to Vice-President Henry Wallace and to our government on Chinese affairs. The statement is inaccurate even as to Owen's name, but what is worse, it is immoral. This belated, sly addition is what one would expect of an informer, but not what one would expect of the publisher of Budenz's book, who must share with him the blame for the immoral editing.

I agree with Senator Lodge when he says that we must arrive at a fairer, nonpartisan method of testing loyalty, and I also agree with him when he points to the *Amerasia* case as one which smells to high heaven, and which must be given an airing. I agree with Senator Margaret Chase Smith when she rebuked McCarthy for having unloosed "The Four Horsemen of Calumny — Fear, Ignorance, Bigotry, and Smear." I agree that we must have stronger leadership. But we must also have a stronger following: we must learn to live with ourselves again. We have it in us to be a great people. If our destiny is big, so are our responsibilities.

Memory of love

The Married Look by **Robert Nathan** (Knopf, $2.50) is the nearest thing he has written to his exquisite *Portrait of Jennie* and in its way quite as haunting a short novel. This is the story of Edward, a California scientist, head of his own laboratory, who looked up one morning from his microscopic study of the mutations of the fruit fly to realize that somewhere along the last twenty years he had lost the look of his wife's young face. He was just as faithful to Ruth as ever and she to him. She cooked what he liked, bought his clothes, and helped him to keep his wilder notions in order — so she had been doing for twenty years; and yet somehow Edward had forgotten the young girl with whom he had fallen in love, and his life turned gray as a result. Since love abhors a vacuum, it isn't long before Edward is looking elsewhere, and what he finds in Clementine is at once a mystery and a familiar which threaten the serenity of his scholarly, well-controlled existence.

Clementine when Edward first saw her was a honey-colored girl in an old-fashioned but becoming dress of light sprigged muslin. She lived in a little roofed-over wagon with white and red sides, which followed the vagaries of her father, who was prospecting for oil. She keeps turning up — she and her wagon — at the oddest times, and it isn't long before Edward is cutting his regular appointments with Shepperd, the astronomer, in order to have a lazy swim with Clementine. Edward is not built for the double life: his only way out of the dilemma is to bring Ruth and Clementine together — and that is the story made piquant and poetic in Mr. Nathan's prose.

Mr. Nathan is a master of the double meaning, and his scientist, whether lonely or infatuated, has a way of thinking which is a delight. "It takes two to keep things; you can't keep them all alone by yourself," he thinks to himself when Ruth is remote. And again, "We look at the world through the lens of our own spirits. If the spirits are high, we see good in everything; if low, the world appears to us as a ball of mud. And my spirits had been low for a week." Such are the touches of skill and speculation in this love story.

The women

White Witch Doctor (Westminster Press, $3.00) is the story of an American woman missionary in the Congo. The author, **Louise A. Stinetorf,** poses the book as a novel, but it could pass just as easily as an autobiography which from first to last rings true. The woman in the story, Ellen Burton, is in her fortieth year when the chronicle begins, a robust farm woman of missionary stock who was not free to follow her bent until after her parents' death. The spirit was strong in her; and despite the Board's protest that she was long past the right age for a foreign appointment, she did the necessary stint at the hospital, and when she could write "R.N." after her name set sail for Africa loaded down with castoff equipment and the gifts which each new missionary takes along to Africa. The book really begins with her arrival at Léopoldville

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where she meets Dr. Early, the mission head, a blunt veteran openly skeptical as to her ability to stand the pace and resentful of evidence that she has a small independent income. His own salary after decades in the field was $300 a year.

Sister Ellen, whose face and figure bear no resemblance whatever to the glamorous young creature on the book jacket, takes hold of her new life with fear and resolution. She has her good moments, as when, in her first talk to the people at Tani, she seizes desperately on that old saying, "It is better to light a candle — a torch, I mean — than to curse the darkness," and her bad ones, as when, on her first night in the compound, a python loops itself over the corner of her muslin bed net. She gradually conquers her fear of the snakes and the leopards and the scorpions. She stands up to Dr. Early and to the Belgian administrators for the things she believes must be done. She takes to heart the advice given her by Dr. Mary: "So, you think you're only a nurse! Well, let me tell you, Ellen, in Africa, this far from any white man's town, you're whatever the occasion demands — or you're nothing at all!" In her more than twenty years of service Sister Ellen becomes the trusted *mama* of the natives whose passage from place to place is telegraphed ahead by the beat of the jungle drums. She does what she can to ease the births and the deaths; she learns how to deal with the chiefs and the Council of Old Men; and when at last the time comes for her to turn home to the Midwest she feels that she is being uprooted. An articulate chronicle, rugged, valiant, and true.

Marion Crawford, nickname "Crawfie," was for seventeen years responsible for the education — and happiness — of Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret. Her devotion to them was reciprocated, and out of it has come ***The Little Princesses*** (Harcourt, Brace, $3.50). Crawfie writes with discretion and without pretense, and the details are pleasantly revealing. We see the youngsters with their fondness for "Li'l Abner" and "Dr. Dolittle." We see Lilibet's rebellion against French verbs when she routed the French teacher by turning the inkwell upside down over her own head. We see their holiday trip into the Underground when their detective was the only one of the party the passengers spotted. We see that Margaret is the more humorous of the girls, and are given the quotation of hers which Barrie put in his play and for which she received the royalty of a penny every time the line was spoken. We find that Bobo, the maid, makes the best fudge in the royal household, the one delicacy the girls are "a little uneager to hand around." We suffer through the strenuosity of the Coronation, at the end of which Queen Elizabeth commented, "We aren't supposed to be human," and we follow with quick interest that very human love story between Prince Philip and the queen-to-be.

Reader's Choice

BY

CHARLES J. ROLO

Two important books published this summer — and they are poles apart in subject matter — focus on the current predominance of zealotry and prefabricated thinking, and on the pressures which are stifling the genuinely liberal spirit. One is ***The Human Use of Human Beings*** (Houghton Mifflin, $3.00) by **Norbert Wiener,** the mathematical genius whose treatise on electronic brains, *Cybernetics*, created a considerable stir in 1948. The other is **Owen Lattimore's *Ordeal by Slander*** (Atlantic–Little, Brown, $2.75).

"Assassination by guesswork"

Owen Lattimore's account of his all-in tussle with Senator McCarthy is a masterpiece of factual exposition, a social document of first-rate importance. Over and above that, it is a tremendously stirring human drama. McCarthy attacked when his victim was serving with a UN mission in Afghanistan, and it fell to Mrs. Lattimore to take counteraction. Lattimore seems to have been remarkably fortunate in his choice of a wife, and no less so in her choice of a lawyer. The chapter in which Mrs. Lattimore herself tells of their sudden involvement in the nightmare brings out very poignantly the human consequences of what Edward Weeks termed "assassination by guesswork."

Press coverage of this *cause célèbre* gave decidedly more prominence to the charges than to the defense. With the entire record compactly assembled between covers, it is unmistakably clear that McCarthy's was a trumped-up case and that Lattimore tore it to tatters. Lattimore's analysis of the China situation may have been wrong, but as Silone once put it, "Liberty is the possibility of making a mistake." Not a shred of direct evidence was produced that impugned Lattimore's loyalty. Nothing brings out the extent of McCarthy's irresponsibility more forcibly than to accept, for the sake of argument, his lurid charge of espionage. For, most assuredly, one is not likely to trap the top spy on the world's crack team by announcing in the headlines that one is hot on his trail.

One of the most shocking things that emerge from *Ordeal by Slander* is that McCarthy did not even take a minimum of trouble to get his principal facts straight. He started out with the gross error that Lattimore had until recently occupied a desk

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in the State Department. His citations from Lattimore's writing were easily shown to be wicked distortions or quotes out of context — material for the most part lifted verbatim from the propaganda mill of the unsavory China Lobby, whose role in this episode clamors for further airing. The three "Communist agents" who supposedly came to this country to confer with Lattimore turned out to be three well-known Mongol fugitives from Communism. As for the letter in which, according to McCarthy, Lattimore "ordered" a director of the OWI to "fire any man loyal to Chiang" and hire Communists — it was read at the hearings (despite Hickenlooper's strenuous objections) and scored several points for Lattimore.

When his case had collapsed, McCarthy, as an afterthought, fell back on Budenz; and Budenz, though only too eager to denounce, produced nothing but a sputter of hearsay, contradicted by three former top-ranking Communists. Testimonials to Lattimore's loyalty were forthcoming from countless impressive sources, among them the former chief of MacArthur's counter-intelligence in the Far East.

The gross inequity in cases like this is that only a Pyrrhic victory is possible. Added to the intangible injuries done him, Lattimore — despite his lawyer's great generosity — used up his entire savings in conducting his defense. McCarthy, of course, reneged on the statement he made twice in the Senate that he would repeat his charges without cloak of immunity or else resign.

The issue which Professor Lattimore highlights is that McCarthy and demagogues of his stripe are gunning not so much for conspiracy as for independent thinking. Antipathy to scholarship and intellectualism were manifest during the hearings; and Senator Hickenlooper seems to have found it highly suspicious that Lattimore, though he produced many passages in his writings showing opposition to Communism, did not express himself in the red-blooded idiom of Mr. Hearst's editorials. "The standards that the witch-hunters are trying to impose on us," says Lattimore, "are the standards of propaganda, of mob thinking, and of thought control." In this connection, he warns of the dangers involved in making star witnesses and national heroes of the renegade Communists, deeply conditioned by a totalitarian past and often swayed by devious personal hatreds.

Lattimore's closing chapters underscore the urgency of reforming the procedure used at Congressional hearings, and draw attention to the need for Congress to impose certain standards of responsible conduct on its members. In this time of semiwar, just how recklessly can a member of the Legislature behave without himself becoming a "bad security risk"?

"The new automatic age"

Dr. Norbert Wiener's *The Human Use of Human Beings* is also a broadside against every kind of thought control and pressure for conformity, a manifesto for the spirit of independence and empiricism.

Subtitled "Cybernetics and Society," Wiener's book concerns itself with the social implications of the sensational discovery that machines can be constructed with a "built-in memory" — machines with the capacity of exercising judgment and of *learning*. There are some technical passages in the text which are unintelligible to a layman such as myself, but the main body of the book is perfectly accessible, and it opens up startling new vistas.

The next technological revolution, Dr. Wiener suggests, will owe more to the development of machines which can perform most of the functions of the human brain than to the development of atomic energy. His rough guess is that it will take the new tools "ten to twenty years to come into their own." The most immediate practical consequence will be "an abrupt and final cessation of demand for the type of factory labor performing purely repetitive tasks"; and among the other not too distant prospects are devices which will go far toward making up for the losses of the maimed, the deaf, and the blind.

Beyond this lie awesome possibilities. The very same principles which have been successfully applied to the building of a machine able to play chess make it perfectly possible, theoretically, to construct a machine "to evaluate military situations and to determine the best move at any given specific stage." Infinitely more remote but also theoretically conceivable, according to Wiener, is the possibility of a machine which will replace the apparatus of government: an electronic Leviathan capable of

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storing up all the information on which government operates and of registering the appropriate decisions.

The operation of some of the newer communication machines, says Dr. Wiener, is precisely parallel to the operation of the living individual: the results of behavior are "reported back" and modify future conduct. The source of the mechanical brain's stunning potentialities is that the "reporting back" is flawlessly truthful: in human beings a variety of factors — prejudice, external pressures, neurosis — can falsify the "reporting back" and make behavior unresponsive to the evidence. Thus the study of electronic brains casts new light on the crucial role of communicative integrity, both in the development of man's potentialities and in the health of society.

Any form of thought control or insistence on conformity is, in Dr. Wiener's analysis, an attempt to make human beings behave in a non-human way. "In the United States," he warns, "we are in the process of developing a new propaganda. . . . We have attempted to synthesize a rigid system to fight fire by fire. . . . For man to be alive is to have the liberty to test new opinions and to find which of them point somewhere. . . . We must resist the psychopathic compulsion to universal likeness."

The electronic brain, like atomic energy, has infinite potentialities for good or evil, depending on how it is used — depending, too, on who feeds it its original store of information. In a society more concerned with know-how than with know-what, it could readily be exploited for quick profits or put to perverted ends by politicians with authoritarian ambitions.

Gertrude's brother, Leo

In Dr. Wiener's view, self-realization hinges on the integrity of man's response to evidence. Precisely the same idea was arrived at by **Leo Stein,** the brother of Gertrude. In his middle sixties, Stein claimed to have rid himself of "a crippling neurosis" through a system of self-analysis which he developed on his own, after two long periods of psychoanalysis. That his improbable claim was more or less justified is apparent in ***Journey into the Self,*** "Being the Letters, Papers & Journals of Leo Stein" (Crown, $4.00).

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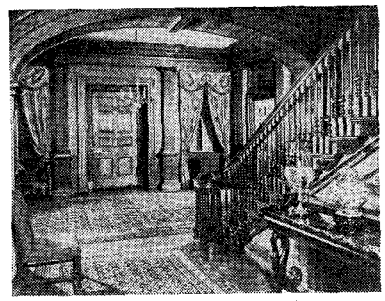

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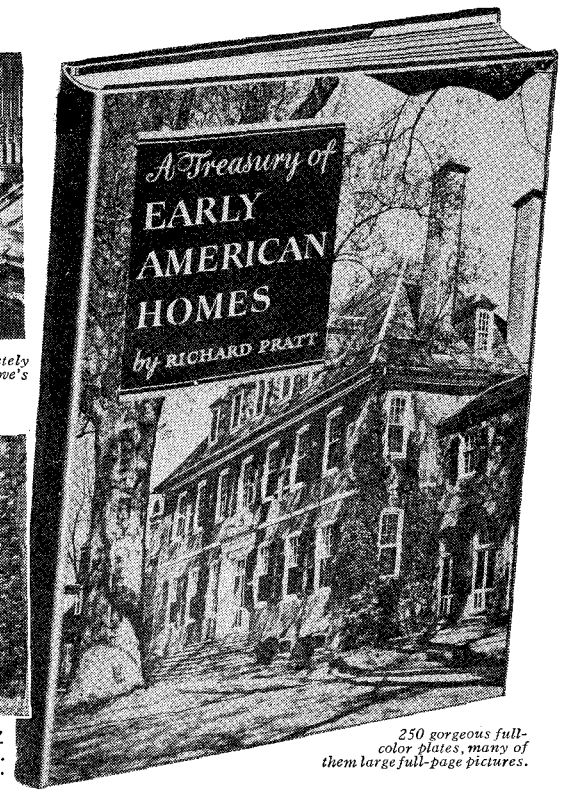

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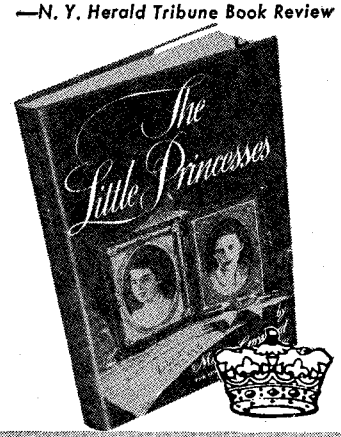

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troduction by Van Wyck Brooks, has four principal strains: Stein's relations with his wife; his relations with his sister; his theories about art; his neurosis and psychological theories. It is rich in interest on all four counts. For we are offered here a chronicle of one of the most extraordinary modern love affairs on record; a stinging character sketch of Gertrude and a devastating commentary on her work; a profusion of original critical ideas and epigrammatic insights about painting; and a curiously affecting account of a lonely, brilliant individual's hard-earned victory over the furies of the unconscious.

Stein's "psychology which never stopped" and endless discussions of "my neurosis" are often extremely tiresome. But the triumphant outcome raises the obsessive self-scrutiny to the status of adventure. In the last decade of his life, Stein experienced a thrilling liberation and awakening. He was able to write the brilliant treatise *Appreciation*, which earned him a certain measure of fame. His marriage became "a second honeymoon." During the harrowing war years in Italy — when he was almost totally deaf, reduced to poverty, and threatened with a concentration camp — he was able to devote himself to scholarship and intensive thought with extraordinary serenity. And the letter he wrote when he learned that death was imminent is that of a man who has outfaced every terror.

Every terror except Gertrude; Leo never quite outfaced his formidable sister, if one can judge from the asperity of what he has to say about her: "Gertrude . . . hungers and thirsts after *gloire*, and it was of course a serious thing for her that I can't abide her stuff and think it abominable. . . . Both [Picasso] and Gertrude are using their intellects, which they ain't got, to do what would need the finest critical tact, which they ain't got neither, and are turning out the most Godalmighty rubbish that is to be found. . . . If Gertrude had been able to express herself *effectively* in English she would never have taken to jargon. . . . Anyone so stupid as that can hardly have a dependable sensitiveness. . . . I simply cannot take Gertrude seriously as a literary phenomenon." *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* he described as "that farrago of rather clever anecdote, stupid brag and general bosh."

The pointedness of Stein's aesthetic generalizations is best suggested by direct quotation. "Art is an excited equilibrium. Classical art tends toward the equilibrium and romantic toward the excitement." "Keep your eye on the object and let your ideas play about it." "My ideal of a picture is that every part of it should oblige the looker-on who has any real sense for a whole to see the rest."

"I thought like a scientist," Stein once said, "but I saw like an artist." The estimate is apposite and it defines the two exciting qualities of *Journey into the Self:* exploratory thinking and creative seeing.

"Black List Forty"

The war in Korea gives great timeliness to a scholarly study of that country sponsored by the Institute of Pacific Relations, ***Korea Today*** (Harvard University Press, $5.00) by **George M. McCune** in collaboration with **Arthur L. Grey, Jr.** Mr. McCune, who died in 1948, had spent half his life in Korea; his study was completed and carried forward to the early part of 1950 by his wife and Mr. Grey. *Korea Today* — a starkly utilitarian volume — is the most comprehensive and up-to-date background book on Korea currently available. Its appendices reproduce the basic documents bearing on Korean foreign relations and contain twenty-two pages of tabulated facts and figures.

"Black List Forty" was the code name for Korea to the U.S. combat troops who landed there, and the label was to prove prophetic. In South Korea, just about every problem and form of disturbance that have cropped up in the liberated countries reached acute proportions. Leftist riots and Rightist terrorism (in the 1948 elections 589 persons were killed, 10,000 jailed for violence), inflation and black-marketeering, depletion of resources, unbalanced budget — the list could be extended for a page or two.

One of the central difficulties, according to McCune, is that the Koreans — under Japanese rule from 1910 to 1945 — have not had a chance to acquire experience in political leadership and high-level administration. The leaders who emerged after the war were avid for independence but clearly not prepared for responsibility, and their record of non-coöperation with the American authorities is pretty dismal.

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At the same time, McCune is sharply critical of U.S. policy for failing to support vigorously the liberal elements in Korean politics — President Syngman Rhee and most of his ministers stand far to the right — and for failing to recognize "the importance of economic reform for the development of political democracy in a country such as Korea."

In North Korea, for several reasons, the Russians have found the going rather easier than the Americans have in the South. In the first place, the Russians were able to fill the "Provisional People's Government" with Communist stooges, and thereafter kept themselves in the background, with the result that they created the impression there was more independence in the North than in the South. Secondly, economic difficulties were somewhat less severe in the North. Thirdly, "The Soviet System . . . was more easily adopted by the Koreans [long conditioned to Japanese despotism] than was Western Democracy. . . . As an individualist, the Korean was inclined to be irresponsible."

The introduction to *Korea Today* states that U.S. responsibility for the failure to unify Korea was "enormous . . . a responsibility shared, but not lessened, by Russia." Here, it seems to me, the author bends over backwards too far in the effort to be objective. His own account shows that the Russians were at no time willing to consider unification, except entirely on their own terms. Meanwhile, from the very start of the occupation, they were training and equipping the North Koreans — obviously for the eventual attempt to conquer the country.

Cloak-and-dagger history

Behind Closed Doors, "The Secret History of the Cold War" (Putnam's, $3.75), is a rather flamboyant compendium of "inside dope," analysis, and prophecy, capped by a ten-point policy program. The authors — **Rear Admiral Ellis M. Zacharias, USN Ret.,** formerly deputy chief of Naval Intelligence, and his collaborator, **Ladislas Farago** — have been operating for some time as a sort of free-lance Intelligence Bureau, collecting information from fugitive Red Army officers, former members of the Soviet and satellite secret polices, atomic scientists, and diplomats and spies of all nations.

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Voroshilov's, the reader sits in on the special session of the Politburo of January 28, 1949, at which it was decided — on the basis of an "Estimate of the Situation" prepared by Stalin's experts and reproduced in the book — to gird for an inevitable showdown with the U.S. The affidavit of another onetime Soviet official describes the drafting of "The Stalin Doctrine" on the night of October 21, 1940, and lists, in order of priority, the areas of magnetic attraction to the U.S.S.R. From Swedish sources, the authors learned that an atomic bomb exploded, accidentally, in the Soviet Union one year before the explosion announced by President Truman. At present, according to "Professor X," Russia is producing four atomic bombs per month.

The factual material in *Behind Closed Doors* covers a tremendous amount of ground, and a good deal of it is high-powered stuff, fascinating and enlightening. It's a great pity that the authors have been so unbridled in prophecy, faultfinding, and straining for sensationalism, thereby involving themselves in a welter of contradictions.

At the outset, they advance the dramatic proposition that Stalin has ruled out an old-fashioned war even with newfangled weapons, and plans to reduce the U.S. to impotent isolation; elsewhere they speak of an "inevitable atomic showdown." In one place, the authors charge that our policy-makers have been criminally soft; in another, that they have been provocatively intransigent. They make much of Washington's blindness to the importance of the psychological battle front, but they themselves prescribe steps whose psychological repercussions would be catastrophic: scrap the Atlantic Pact and slough off weak allies.

The cloak-and-dagger manner in which the book is written is sometimes carried to preposterous lengths. As a preface to revealing what they call "The Bolshevik Master Plan," the authors announce that this is the first time in history that the most secret of all documents, an operations plan, has been given away free. The supersensational document turns out to be one of Stalin's university lectures, and it is just like a dozen other Communist pronouncements on the strategy of world revolution. *Behind Closed Doors* is certainly very lively reading and genuinely informative,

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but the analysis is blunted by inconsistency and the "action program" unimpressive — "a return to the principles and policies which made the Allied victory possible."

Remembrance of things past

The House of Breath (Random House, $2.75), a first novel, is yet another indication that Hemingway's influence on young writers is on the way out. **William Goyen's** prose is as sonorously emotional and lushly spangled as the previous generation's was muted and bare. His book is in effect a prose poem, an incantation which conjures up the narrator's small home town in Texas — his family, his neighbors, and his own experiences — in the years of his childhood and adolescence. Here is a sample of the novel's intricately embroidered texture: —

Your River . . . was ornamented with big, drowsy snapturtles sitting like figurines on rocks; had little jeweled perch in it and thick purple catfish shining in it and sliding cottonmouth water-moccasins. It crawled, croaking with bullfrogs and ticking and sucking and clucking and shining, round through meadows of bottomland palmettos (fanning in a breeze like a meadow of Methodist women in July Prayer Meeting), between muscadine vines that plashed up like fretted fountains. . . .

In *The House of Breath*, the narrator is seeking to uncover his real self through remembrance and reliving of things past. Goyen's is an ambitiously experimental book, which is all to the good, but it cannot be said that the author has realized his intentions with much success. The novel abounds in passages that have a poetically original sheen; in strong feeling sensitively recaptured. But Goyen has neglected to pay his dues to the sage dictum of Buffon which included sound thinking in the trinity of values essential to good writing. *The House of Breath* is deficient in coherence and cohesion, and its meaning remains muffled. One sometimes has the impression that the author is simply indulging in linguistic pyrotechnics, and boredom is apt to creep in.

That *The House of Breath* is decidedly flawed is, in the final count, of less consequence than the fact that it has exciting qualities. Coming as it does from a very young writer, it announces a notable talent which already has great verbal resources at its command.

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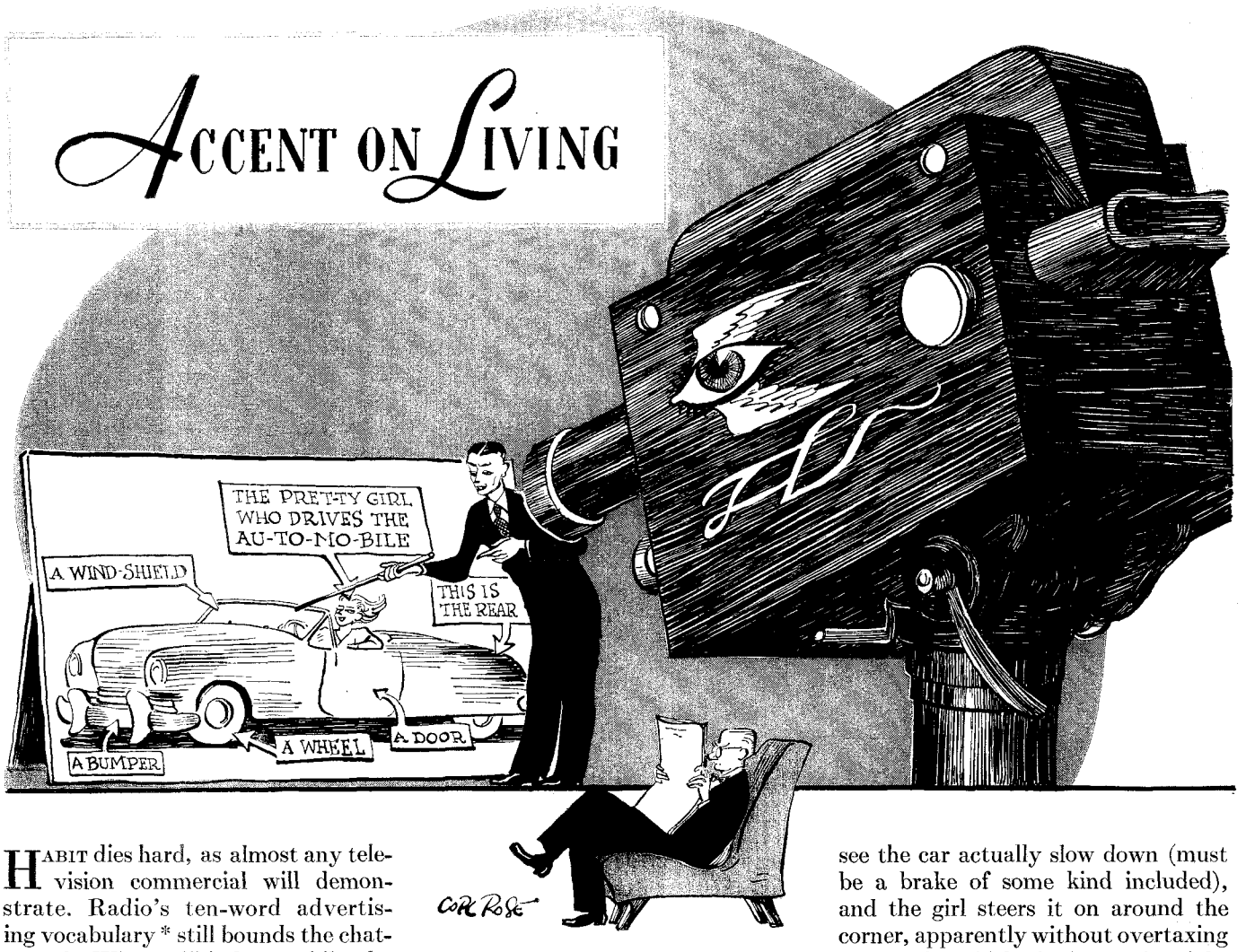

THIS MONTH

HABIT dies hard, as almost any television commercial will demonstrate. Radio's ten-word advertising vocabulary * still bounds the chatter of TV's spellbinders, while the accompanying pictorial techniques are largely based on the kind of trick photography that once animated cartoon advertising in the old-time movie house. So advertisers dabble in motion picture film "recordings," but they don't seem to know what to do with the movies beyond showing The Product in motion instead of standing still. Messages by smoke signals are about the only stunt that TV has not carried over from more primitive days. Of TV's new power to tap the whole world for information and ideas, the advertiser seems thus far unaware. Example: —

The television commercial for the Lincoln Cosmopolitan is based on two main assumptions: that no TV owner has ever seen an automobile, and that proof is required that it will run. Thus, the film transcription opens up with a pretty girl getting into a top-down convertible. She pushes a button to lower a window. The window comes down! She closes the door. It not only closes but it stays shut!

Haven't you dreamed of owning a car like that? But there are more wonders to come.

The girl touches the starter button, sets the automatic transmission, steps on the gas — and what happens? *The car moves off down the street.* Yes, there she goes, she's on her way! Everything in order, too: no bucking or yawing, car seems to steer effectively, and she keeps right on along a boulevard as slick as you please. But look — what have we here? The camera shifts to a close-up of the left front wheel. Nothing wrong there, either: around and around it goes, it's neither lopsided nor falling off. Look at that shiny hubcap revolve! What a car! Back to the girl again, we see her hair blowing in the breeze. Fun, eh? Radio was never like this.

Having shown that she can start a Lincoln Cosmopolitan and drive it, all by herself, the girl goes into a bit of fancy stuff — a corner. You can see the car actually slow down (must be a brake of some kind included), and the girl steers it on around the corner, apparently without overtaxing the sturdy vehicle, for it remains right side up, wheels still on, and with nary a smash to show for her feat. Ye-e-e-e-es, friends, there is nothing finer on the road.

The girl bowls along for a few more rods of boulevard and pulls up near the entrance to a smart hotel. Still unassisted, she manages to bring the car to a dead stop. She opens the door, which still works perfectly, steps out, closes the door successfully, and departs on some errand.

The announcer's running story during these astonishing goings-on is in standard radio language, but he makes it sound as if the girl — doubtless a professional stunt-woman — were surviving a plunge over Niagara Falls in a newer, finer, easier, smoother, richer, bigger barrel.

Chevrolet presents an equally bizarre view of a new sedan in full working order which gets over a highway without mishap. It stops and starts without flying to pieces, but one gets the impression that this is a locally contrived commercial sponsored only by the New England dealers, and what additional tricks the car can

* Richer, bigger, easier, finer, newer, smoother, better, milder, safer, brighter.

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show on a larger hookup have not been vouchsafed the Boston audience. (I do not recall a pretty girl as the daredevil pilot of the Chevrolet commercial, but after all, it's a lower-priced car than the Lincoln.)

Oldsmobile, meanwhile, seems content to depict a man and woman perched on a huge rocket ("Rocket" engine — get it?) and I am not sure whether the Olds is put through its paces or not. That the car is susceptible of being driven I have no doubt.

But now that they have sated our curiosity about what an automobile looks like on the highway, the commercials might show us how these cars come into being. Even a TV owner might enjoy seeing the testing tracks, laboratories, and production lines. Where are the bungalow-sized machines that make the bodies, the metallurgists searching out flaws with mysterious rays, the great lathes and borers? What is involved in crating a car for shipment overseas? What is the painting process? Most of the motor makers had incomparably better exhibits at the New York World's Fair in 1939 than anything they have shown the growing millions of TV customers.

The brewers are similarly perplexed by what to put into a filmed commercial. They have thought up photographing beer in the bottle, beer in the glass, and people fondling these novelties, but surely this is something short of a traveler's tale for anyone who has ever set foot in a saloon.

Anything that comes in a can with a label on it seems to fascinate the TV commercial folks almost as completely as the self-propulsion principle of the automobile. A gallon of wallpaper remover strikes them as the supreme visual triumph. The TV lens first stares at it for about a minute, then circles it cautiously to show its four sides. At this point an actress picks up the can and talks about it for a while. She reads the instructions on the label and, as the camera enlarges it in a close-up so that we can read it too, she reads it again. She puts the can down, reluctantly, and repeats to the audience the gist of the label. "A pint of this" (patting the can) "added to a gallon of water," says the actress, "and that's all there is to it." (And all that remains is to get the paper off the wall.) By the time the actress has gone through more or less identical routines with the half-gallon and one-quart sizes, the TV viewer will have a fair idea of what a can of wallpaper remover looks like.

The advertising values of reiterating a trade name or symbol are beyond dispute, but repeating a commercial film sequence week after week suggests a phrase which deserves meditation by TV. The phrase is: "This is where we came in."

CHARLES W. MORTON

AT HOME OFFSHORE

by CARLETON MITCHELL

CARLETON MITCHELL *is a Rear Commodore of the Cruising Club of America and makes his home, when he is not afloat, at Annapolis, Maryland. He is the author of* Islands to Windward, *the account of a cruise from Trinidad to the Bahamas, and his new book,* Yachtsman's Camera, *will be published this fall.*

IT WAS blowing hard when we left Havana. It had been blowing hard for several days. The flags over Morro Castle stood out rigid, bright rectangles against a bright sky. We had moved *Carib* over under the lee of the northern shore of the harbor to ease a nasty chop. There was no sign the wind would drop.

"Hell," said Hod, "it's never going to let up."

"No," I answered, "I guess not."

So we took my wife Zib ashore to Zaragozana's for a last lunch of moro crabs, and stopped by to pick up clearance papers for Nassau, and bought a baked ham and a case of Mexican Carta Blanca beer, and got out through the entrance just at sunset. The fortress looked massive and impregnable, typifying the solidity of the land.

Outside there was quite a slop of a sea, but it was worse close in than farther out. By the time we were a mile off the beach there were no tops on the seas. They looked big in the strange light of dusk but there was no weight in them. *Carib* rose easily to each, hardly wetting her deck. As the lights ashore winked on, we saw that

we were getting a set from the Gulf Stream.

At first we were steering about north, which would take us to Key West. That wasn't our destination. Our idea was to get east along the Cuban coast to the resort town of Varadero. We hadn't seen a good swimming beach since leaving Grand Cayman. Varadero sounded fine. But it looked as if the wind had other ideas. We came about and did no better than east-southeast.

About an hour later the wind gave one last gasp and died. There was a sudden squall and then no wind. Not a breath. We expected it to come back, but after a while started the engine. It stayed calm all night. The sea dropped off entirely. Ashore towns and lights with musical names slid steadily astern: Rio Jaruco, Santa Cruz del Norte, Puerto Escondido, Matanzas.

At dawn Hod called me. Just ahead a light dominated a cay. "Piedras," said Hod. He had turned off the engine. *Carib* had bare steerageway. Below, perhaps six or seven fathoms, the bottom was plain: hard sand dotted with occasional humps of coral.

We turned in and picked up some buoys. Nothing checked with the Pilot Book. The water became murky. Finally we discovered that Bahia Cárdenas is a big place. We worked in behind a long low point called Icacos; it had begun to blow hard again, this time from almost due north, so we decided that Varadero could wait for another cruise and beat up into the lee of Icacos. Close under

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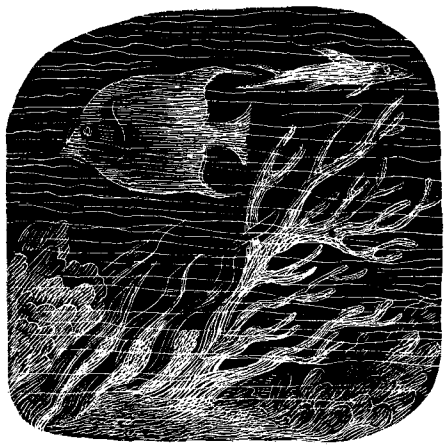
the land the water was flat but wind howled through the rigging. In the worst puffs the whole boat trembled.

It blew the whole day. Two men sculled by in a dinghy and we bought a pargo, still flapping. We were content. We swam over the side and ate



fish for lunch, slept through the afternoon, ate fish for dinner, and went right back to sleep.

That dawn was like the last, all the colors any painter ever dreamed but no wind. A wonderful tropic smell came off the land. We sat on top of the deckhouse, waiting for enough light to see our way out. When things began to resume their shapes we got in the anchor.

After dropping the Cuban coast the horizon was empty. We were sailing waters that had known the whole incredible streaming of life from the Old World to the New. Before us had passed explorers, colonists, traders, soldiers, priests, and buccaneers, a ghostly procession inspired by greed, by lust, by power, by religion, and by all the other motives and dreams that can send men forth into the unknown.

To the east stretched the Old Bahama Channel, a shimmering chasm of blue lying between the pale-green water of the Great Bahama Bank and the dark-green mountains of Cuba; to the west, beyond the Gulf Stream, extended the peninsula of Florida. Ahead, except for a tangle of reefs and uninhabited low cays forming the Cay Sal Bank, our way was clear.

Observations of the sun during the afternoon put us east of the estimated reckoning. Cay Sal is no place to approach after dark. Since the days of sailing ships ended, the light on Double Head Shot Cay has not been lighted. Hod climbed the mast. He waved and pointed: as he signaled I swung the bow until it headed towards the abandoned tower, and read the bearing from the compass. It was somehow an unreal procedure. I never saw the cay from the deck. But I pictured it from an earlier visit: the sun baking down on the rocks and thousands of screaming sea birds rising ahead as we walked among the nests, the tracks of turtles across the beaches, the grave of a lightkeeper desecrated by seekers after treasure.

A strange thing was the calm. The rising sun had not brought wind. We ran the engine during periods when no air was stirring, turned it off as soon as there was enough breeze for steerageway. For hours at a time the Gulf Stream lay unruffled. No ripples, no underlying swell. Nothing. The sun went down and the stars came out. They reflected in the water.

We kept on through the night and the next day, paralleling the unseen coast of Florida. Nothing came over the sharp bright ring of the horizon. Then before sunset we angled towards the east and small humps appeared, and when it became dark twin flashes glowed ahead. We had reached Great Isaac Cay, guardian of Northwest Providence Channel. Here we swung sharply to the east for Nassau.

A moderate breeze struck in from the west — most unusual in tradewind latitude, consequently doubly acceptable. Off to starboard in the darkness were the rock forms of the Brothers, East and West, and the Isaacs, Little, Middle, and East; and farther along the hidden teeth of Gingerbread Ground Reef; and still farther the wondrous sand plateau of the Great Bahama Bank.

Early in the morning we rounded Great Stirrup, a final turn. The breeze was still in the west, lighter with the sun. We held in close along the fringe of cays, following the line of soundings. Between small islands the pale green of the Banks shone with unreal brilliance.

During the afternoon the breeze gradually faded. Before it trailed off entirely, a tiny hump broke the flat line of the sea: the top of the water tower above Fort Fincastle, the highest point on New Providence.

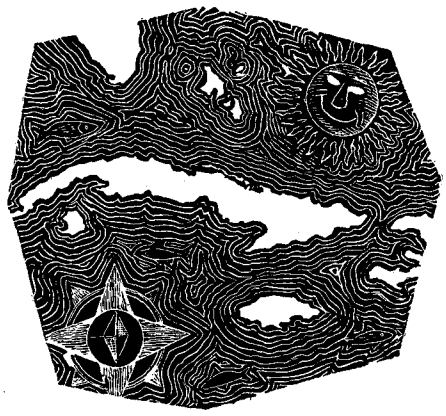
We could have been at anchor within three hours. There was gas in the tanks. Instead we drifted. Ahead was the land, the sheltered harbor and fine town of Nassau. Still we drifted. Being out on the water was best. There was no hurry. It was too good to end. . . .

That, like all accounts of passages, is a relation of conditions and progress. We left Havana, we covered four hundred miles — painlessly, in this case, because of a freak of weather — and we fetched Nassau. But that is only part of the story: the rest is what makes sailing a way of life.

Carib lying a few miles offshore was more than a boat becalmed. To the four of us aboard, she was home: man's portable castle. We happened to be in the Providence Channel. Under similar conditions, we would have been just as content off Montauk Point or the Golden Gate or Land's End. Life aboard would have been about the same, and we would have had the same feeling of completeness.

During our passage every moment of every day had been filled. There is always something to do for a small boat on the open sea. Giant steamers are likened to cities: so many kilowatts of electric power, so many loaves of bread baked, so many gallons of water consumed. But no one has attempted to find a comparison for cruising boats poking about the lonely places.

Aboard we had the goods and services taken for granted by civilized man. We pressed a button and had electric light; we turned a valve and had drinking water; we ate hot food and slept on spring mattresses and drank our fruit juice chilled. If we had a headache there was aspirin in the medicine chest. If we felt like reading there were shelves of books. Rotating a knob brought us the noises and doings of all mankind. Torn pants could be mended, shoes shined,



cocktails mixed. Into an object some forty-five feet long and twelve wide were compressed all the items of a well-stocked house: food, beverages, linens, clothes; pots, dishes, glasses, silver; medicine, cosmetics; books, writing paper, pictures — everything. And in quantities to last several people for days or weeks — no running to

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the corner drugstore for castor oil or to the grocery for mustard!

But few houses have to manufacture their own electricity, or carry fresh water in the basement. Even if they do, they are hardly called upon to furnish and accommodate their own means of propulsion. Or to take along the equipment to find where they are. So in that same space, a space of considerably less cubic footage than the most modest of cottages, were also placed an engine, a generator, batteries, tanks for fuel and water, and an intricate maze of pipes and wires. Plus a few other items not generally found in houses: sheets and sails and halyards; squares of canvas and bags of blocks; awnings and covers; and such things — required by the Coast Guard and common sense — as life jackets, fenders, fire extinguishers, and code flags. . . .

So as we made our way along we were a complete unit. A part of our pleasure came from our knowledge of independence. Part came from having the skills that kept everything functioning. Part came from pride in our boat, and our relation to her. We tended her needs and she kept us safe and comfortable. Our time was filled. We lived four happy days, days of peace and content. We saw the dawn lighten the eastern sky, we saw the sun shafting deep into the blue water, we saw the day fade and the night begin. We did our daily tasks and lazed in the shadow of the sails; we finished our night tricks at the wheel and slept deeply. We trailed fishing lines astern and watched bos'n birds wheel overhead. There were bucket baths under the bowsprit and long involved discussions in the cockpit. We sat alone with our thoughts when we wanted to be alone, we gathered by the helmsman when we wanted companionship. The day and its events were sufficient in themselves.

To desire nothing beyond what you have is surely happiness. Aboard a boat it is often possible to achieve just that: that is why sailing is a way of life, one of the finest of lives.

●

MORE SEX DATA

by HUGHES MEARNS

Sought gifts to say, "I love you!"
In window and on shelf;
Found nothing worthy of you —
Bought cuff links for myself.

THE THREE-DIME DOLLAR

by EDWIN BATEMAN MORRIS

Edwin Bateman Morris *was formerly associated with the Office of the Supervising Architect in the Federal government.*

The low-cost house, as we laughingly call it, is of course controlled by dollar value. The reference is not to the old brownstone-front dollar, but to the modern form-fitting one. You may gloomily think that there is not much left of it except a good portrait and a nice crackle; but it actually does have a firm purchasing power, equal to three — perhaps four — of the potent dimes of yesteryear.

In building our dream houses, we must give consideration to our dream currency, carefully remembering that any resemblance to the former dollar is purely coincidental. We must build houses which, condensed like the dollar, also retain the same subtle glamour that lingers on in the dollar's pleasant rustle and the value-reminiscent color.

For instance, they used to build columned porticoes — with our more anemic dollar, now too expensive. Resourcefully, we use instead at doorways a few projecting overhead two-by-sixes with one across the end, giving a fetching shadow at small cost. And when it rains we wear a raincoat.

The same smart principle applies to the matter of room size. Dependence is placed on visual appeal. That is, it does not have to be a room, so long as it looks like a room. A ten-by-twelve space which has been tinted with a keen shade of rose-glow or a clever pink will look — approximately of course — eleven by thirteen-six. And a so-called budget-height room can be made to look less low and breathless, in fact almost premeditated, if a gay band is inspirationally painted near the ceiling.

Kitchens, by use of the beautician technique, can be made very small. The housewife is lured on by sweet talk of saving of steps; which is convincing, since, in the beautiful condensed tidiness of the room, if she took a step she would be in the refrigerator or outside by the garbage container.

Therefore a charmingly designed picture window is placed in some convenient spot so that she can look out and see that there still is space. When she has done a dozen difficult push-ups getting pans and skillets from intricate hiding places at instep level, she can see, though sandwiched in between sanitary tile and metal surroundings, that others in the world move about freely; and new hope is kindled within her.

The kitchen counter, by smart designing, is extended to form a quaint mirage of a dining room, without any striving for false elegance. Backless stools offer uncomfortable perches which encourage diners to hurry — thus giving the housewife more time for relaxation, if she can find a place for it.

The living room will suggest such relaxation even though, because of costs, there will be little space. Its *décor* (to give illusion of size, if not actual size) will be mostly shelves and closets, the higher levels, useless for anything else, being cleverly reserved for such little-used things as books. At lower levels will be ingenious condensed accommodations for phonograph, radio, television. A panel amusingly lowers to disclose writing desk and telephone, for simultaneous use. Wedged into the frugal space in the middle of the room is an up-to-date decorative chair.

A new type of American living is brought into being by these modern close-fitting houses, so round, so firm, so fully packed. But now and then their inhabitants feel the need of going to a night game or a wide-spaces movie where they can enjoy the feeling of being able to stoop without sticking.

This decompression has providentially been made possible by the rise of baby-sitters. These technicians can be hired to huddle in the decorative chair beside the dim decorative lamp which lights your table, perhaps beautifully made from an old sewing machine or a churn, accepting money in return for confinement. The tenants can thus squeeze out into the open, leaving the sitter in their lovely carefully congested dream house, while they plunge deep into Elbow Room.

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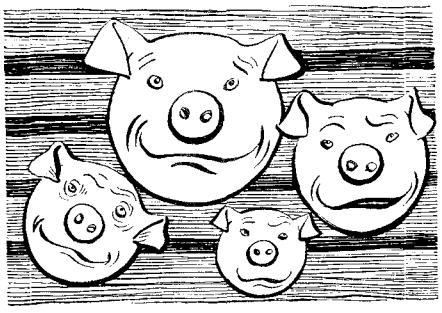


Pigs

by RIXFORD KNIGHT

Readers will remember Rixford Knight *for other findings about barnyard animals. He is a farmer in Jamaica, Vermont.*

The best way to build a pigpen is to use two-by-six planks with four-inch spaces between them so that children and guests will have room to rest their feet on the lowest plank and lean over the top one while watching the pig. The top plank should be as high as a person's armpits. Not to keep the pig in — you can't keep him in anyway — but to serve as a support from which the children and guests can suspend themselves when the pig approaches so close as to threaten their toes.

There is more to be learned from watching the pig than any of the other farm animals. Kittens are cute and colts or calves are appealing, but the frame of mind of the person watching them is quite different from that of the person watching a pig. It may be that there is the possibility of character differentiation here, so that we might say: "The character of the person who watches pigs is superior to the character of one who prefers to watch kittens or calves or puppies."

If this is so, the explanation probably is in the character of the pig himself since the pig resembles human beings more closely than any other farm animal, having an intestinal tract approximately the length of our own.

It is commonly supposed that the pig is a nasty animal who by nature prefers to wallow in his own filth. This is not so. The pig is one of the very few animals, wild or domestic, who habitually choose a particular spot to do their chores in and who rigidly adhere to their choice. In this not trivial respect he resembles the more cultured of the human race.

It is true that a pig who is reared in a slum tends to take on the character and appearance of a slum dweller. But it is also true that one who has had advantages will benefit from them. His skin will be smooth and pink, and his clean white hairs will show a precise and meticulous part down the ridge of his back. Cynics say he keeps clean because he is continually rubbing himself against a post to alleviate the irritation caused by lice. The answer to this is that pigs, at least, do not like to have lice and try to get rid of them.

But it is in respects more fundamental even than cleanliness that the pig rewards study. After watching a pig for an hour or two, one is bound to appreciate that in the pursuance of his ends the pig possesses the same wary but confident indifference to forces irrelevant to those ends that characterizes the most successful of our business, political, and military leaders. And he too likes to have his back scratched.

Of course the ends that motivate a pig are not, except in a general way, the ends that motivate us; and his methods of attaining his ends are not, except in respect of perseverance, methods we should care to emulate. It is a harrowing experience for one of my own dental frailty to listen to a pig cracking the pits from two bushels of canning peaches in order to get the meats within. He will also crunch, Fletcherize, and swallow the heads, beaks, eyes, brains, and feathers of eight large canning roosters. And if not properly dieted a sow will do the same with her newborn young. Her husband will anyway, if he happens around.

This is due to the fact that pigs are not inhibited. It is practically impossible to inhibit a pig. I would rather undertake almost any other farm task than to try to inhibit a pig from sticking his nose into the skim-milk pail before I get it poured into the trough.

Many of our troubles as humans come from our being inhibited against doing things we want to do. The pig does not operate under that disadvantage. He is what he is, and Miss Stein would surely say that he is not needing to be changing. He gets along very well. It is hard to see how he could do better for himself.

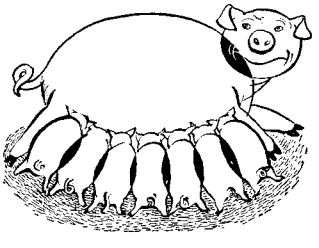
You are thinking to say: "Ah, but what happens to him in the end?" In the end he will be dispatched fairly painlessly and be eaten by people who in the end will succumb fairly painfully and be eaten by worms; though this last distressing probability can be got around by incarceration in a solid gold or lead casket, so that we can look forward to a happier life after death than a pig can.

In a way it is true that a pig is not a free agent, and that he has to do what man tells him not to do and feels a compulsion not to do everything his master tells him to do. But even in this perverse way he is exercising his individual initiative, a trait which enables an individual to do others before they do him. Our largest and most successful industries have been built up through the exercise of individual initiative.

But the pig's most enviable virtue is his practicality. A practical person is one who knows what he wants and refuses to be distracted from getting it by contemplation of scenery, sonatas, or poetry. I have yet to meet an impractical pig.

I would not want to say definitely that the virtues I have mentioned are the ones that attract people who like to watch pigs. Under the headings Beef, Pork, and Lamb, in Miss Farmer's cookbook, thirty-three recipes are devoted to beef, forty-five to pork, and thirty to lamb, and the possibility cannot be excluded that considerations associated with these recipes may influence the reflections of persons who like to watch pigs. But I dislike to believe this.

Instead I prefer to think that these people are actuated by admiration for the pig's perseverance, for his independent spirit, his wary but confident indifference to forces not serving his ends, and for the practical nature of these ends. I like to think that children and guests are learning these things from the pig. Because it is characteristics like these that assure



success in the world. Impractical reflections about poetry, philosophy, or the nature of the physical universe don't serve any ends that a well-adjusted pig would think worth a moment's consideration. It is, for example, the great tragedy of Mr. Einstein's career that he has never been able to make himself think, look, or act like a pig.

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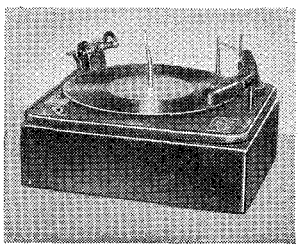

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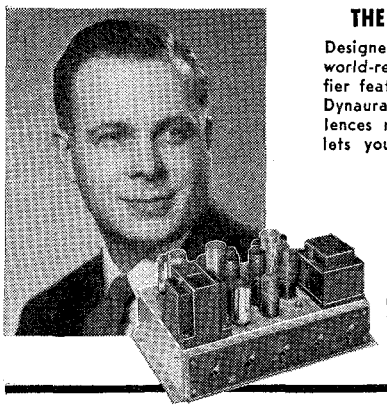

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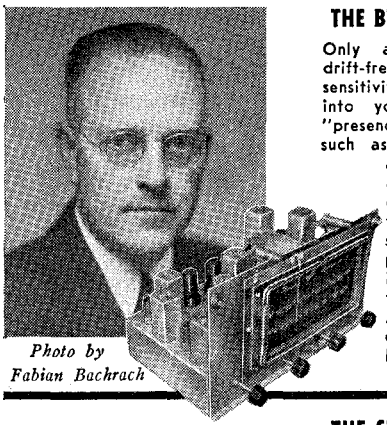

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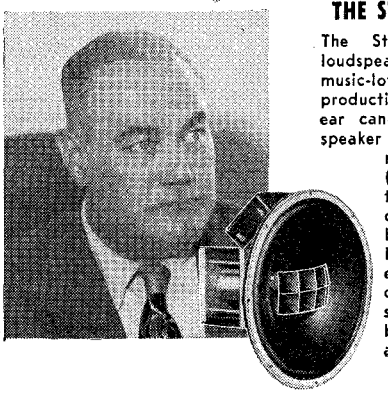

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by JOHN M. CONLY

JOHN M. CONLY *is a former New York and Washington newspaperman, now copy editor of* Pathfinder. *His article on high-fidelity radio phonographs, "They Shall Have Music," appeared in the March* Atlantic, *and we shall be publishing a quarterly feature in this field by Mr. Conly beginning with the January issue.*

SOMETHING epochal happened in 1950: Arturo Toscanini took an interest in making phonograph records.

This was probably of more symbolic than practical importance. Toscanini is eighty-three; and for the last thirty of the fifty-four years since Emile Berliner invented disk records, the maestro has been putting music on them with some regularity. However, it is no secret in the trade that he has regarded them at best as an evil economic necessity. And his chief concern, when recording, was that he should have veto power over releasing the result.

The news of Toscanini's change of heart was happily revealed (within earshot of the maestro, who made no demur) by an NBC official, at the end of the NBC Symphony's spring tour. It came as reinforcement of a promise that next year should see the issuance of something long awaited — a Toscanini Beethoven Ninth Symphony. Toscanini has recorded, but vetoed, many Ninths. This time, presumably, he intended to get down to business, to keep on playing, recording, listening, and replaying until he had something too good to veto. (Meanwhile, perhaps as a trial run, he was going to record Verdi's *Requiem* during his summer session at La Scala, Milan.)

Thereafter, the NBC man was too absorbed in "leaking" data on other, late summer–early fall Toscanini releases (Smetana's *The Moldau*, for instance) to divulge an explanation of the maestro's change of feeling — if, indeed, he knew any.

In lieu of inside information, it may plausibly be assumed that what converted the Great Man were the developments that have turned the recording industry practically inside out in the last two and a half years. These would reach him in two ways: the studio chore of recording music, with its invariable editing and patching, has become vastly easier than it used to be; and the end product is really recognizable music, not a ghostly, rasping mockery of it.

The first of these effects comes about through the studio use of tape recording, the second through the development of high-fidelity phono pickups, amplifiers, and speakers — and through microgroove recording, better known (now with RCA Victor's graceful approval) as LP. It was this last which really touched off the revolution.

A bare three years back, even an avid record enthusiast scarcely needed to risk his neck (angling it to scan the album titles on the shelves) more than once a month to keep abreast of new releases. When he spied one he had been waiting for, it took him only a few moments in a booth to confirm or blast his anticipation. Then he relinquished (or not, as the case may be) about $8.75 and took himself thence.

Now things are different, at least in metropolitan record shops. For one thing, the customer's visits are likelier to be weekly than monthly. Even so, when he enters, there is shoved at him an almost paralyzing stack of aesthetically colorful cardboard envelopes, each containing an attested fifty minutes of music, received since his last visit. Thumbing through them, he encounters three Haydn symphonies, a Vaughan Williams quartet, a Beethoven wind octet

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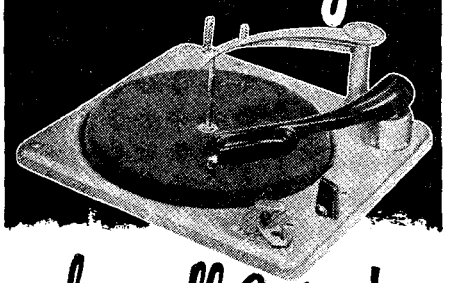

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Looking at the makers' labels is no help at all. There are, of course, the old stand-by's — Victor, Columbia, Vox, Mercury, Capitol, London, Decca. But the bulk of the stack bears utterly unfamiliar names like Relax, Elite, Renaissance, Period, Dial, REB, Paradox, Rondo, and Griffon.

The fantastic fact is, there are better than fifty companies, at this writing, making LP's — and mostly only LP's.

Because vinylite LP's are tough, many a music shop will let a customer return one if he doesn't like it. This, in turn, encourages him to try unfamiliar music — a concerto grosso, perhaps, by Giovanni Sammartini, Gluck's teacher, instead of the César Franck symphony. Here is what gladdens the small record maker, for the Sammartini concerto can be played — and well played — by a chamber orchestra in Vienna for about the fee James C. Petrillo wants for thirty minutes of a U.S. musician's time. It can be taped on the spot, edited (with scissors, like film and unlike the wax master-disks of yore), and shipped back to America in a tin can. Thereafter, a big recording company will print it on vinylite for the small entrepreneur at a cost of something like $1.50 a record — labels, art, text, envelopes and all. As one New York LP maker says: Sell only 1000 copies and you still clear a nice profit.

The pleasant thing is that — strictly for the nonce — the big companies seem to view this rather benignly. The public is so voracious for LP's that nobody is crowding anybody, and meanwhile the staff can get around and have a little fun. While RCA was shepherding Toscanini home from his tour, a Columbia crew was junketing toward Prades, France. There Pablo Casals, the good gray cellist who has renounced concert tours as long as Franco rules Spain, was serving as focal point of a pilgrimage of instrumental virtuosi from all over the world, bent on joining him in a Bach bicentennial festival. What Columbia expected to reap was hard to figure, for the festival's high points were to be performances of the six Brandenburg concerti (which Columbia had just released in excellent playings by Fritz Reiner and the Pittsburgh Symphony) and the suites for solo cello (which Casals himself had recorded earlier this year for another label, the Bach Society). But tape recorders are portable, and LP's are cheap enough so that even duplication is no sin.

At any rate, *that* kind of duplication is no sin. The duplication which grays the hair of small LP makers is the duplication by big outfits of LP releases on 78-revolutions-per-minute (the old "standard" speed) records. They're afraid it may stop.

When it does, the big manufacturers may see fit to pull out the props under the current $4.85–$5.95 list prices of LP's, already weakened by drastic discount wars among retailers in some cities. Thereupon may vanish the "nice profit" of the small operator.

On the other hand, at midsummer no manufacturer seemed to be planning any hasty price-cutting. George Mendelssohn, the shrewd proprietor of Vox records (a middle-sized or six-figure outfit, which easily weathered the change from 78's to all-LP) was sanguine as he left for Vienna to hire two more soloists and record Bach's *St. John Passion*. There is no reason for anyone to cut prices, he thinks, in the near future — certainly not until after the coming winter's busy season. At present prices, people are buying as quickly as they familiarize themselves with the new music available. (He is focusing on music not too unfamiliar, at least in idiom: Schubert's E-flat mass; Monteverde's *Orfeo;* Mozart's *Coronation* concerto.)

Then there are specialized LP

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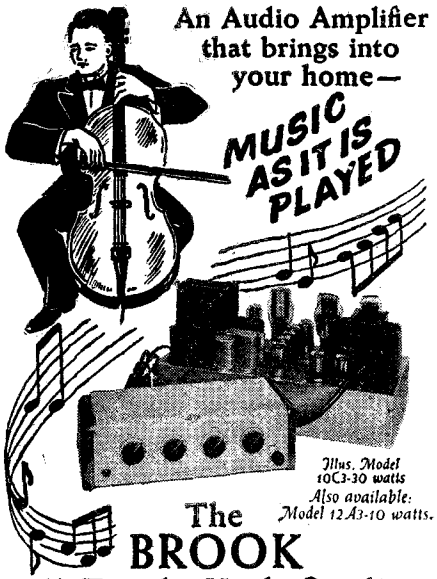

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companies who don't care a hang whether anyone else cuts prices or not. One such is Ross Russell, otherwise known as Dial Records, whose motto is: "Stay out of the way of the larger firms. Better yet, stay ahead of them." Russell, originally proprietor of a Hollywood music shop specializing in Dixieland jazz, got ahead of them in the post-war years, when they failed to appreciate the phenomenon called bop. Now, although he is still in the bop business, with an LP featuring the saxophonist Charlie "Bird" Parker, sometimes called the "greatest bopper of them all," he is ahead of them again with such serious modernists of the twelve-tone school as Schönberg and Alban Berg. A goodly stable of this music's foremost exponents record almost exclusively for the ex-Dixielander, who isn't a bit worried.

Like many of the small LP makers tinctured with crusading spirit, Russell is quite sure some of his records are the best there are, a pair of current favorites being Stravinsky's chamber opera, *Renard*, and his opéra bouffe, *Mavra*. A New York competitor, Elaine Music Shop, makes even more fervent claims for another ultramodern work, Edgar Varese's *Ionization*, written for three dozen percussion instruments. This is cautiously described as "the most sensational record ever made."

So it may be. However, oddly enough, the almost undisputed composer-hero of the LP saga thus far is a very unsensational old gentleman dead a century and a half. Franz Josef Haydn, after years of neglect, is clicking like a castanet. One month alone has seen eight Haydn symphonies issued on LP's; another, two masses. The *Creation* is available (and a good job, too) for the first time in twenty-five years of electrical recording. People are learning that Haydn wrote quartets other than the *Emperor*, and other symphonies just as fetching as the *Clock* and the *Surprise* — notably, for instance, the delightful *Bear*, No. 82, in C.

Credit for a good deal of the Father of the Symphony's sudden vogue belongs to a two-headed, dual-natured organization called the Haydn Society. It describes itself as an "ordinary business venture" which yet "falls into an eleemosynary category." By this it means it is dedicated primarily to getting just and long-overdue recognition for Papa Haydn, but is pretty sure it can make

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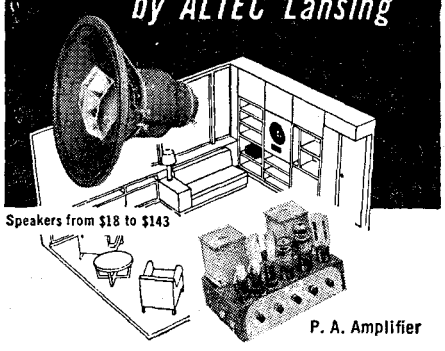

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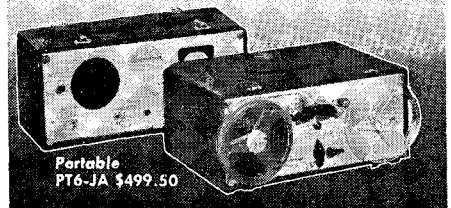

MORE RADIO AND RECORDING ENGINEERS USE MAGNECORDERS THAN ALL OTHER PROFESSIONAL TAPE RECORDERS

some useful LP money at the same time, as indeed it does. Its musicologists (it is also the foremost publisher of Haydn scores) and American engineering staff are headquartered in Vienna, its business offices in Boston. Occasionally it ventures into the works of composers influenced by Haydn (it has done Mozart's *Coronation* mass), but promises to stay safely on the far side of Bartók and Stravinsky.

A neighbor and competitor of the Haydn Society is a new but ivy-clad LP maker called Harvard University, which has entered the field with a Lowell House Musical Society performance of Handel's opera *Acis and Galatea*. Some commercial record makers might dismiss this effort as amateurish. But others seem to strive purposely for a similar informal, up-close, intimate atmosphere, which comes very attractively off noiseless LP surfaces.

A good example is the Bach *Coffee Cantata* made recently by Allegro Records. Allegro's head man, Paul Puner (who once helped run Musicraft), has just invested a very substantial sum in a disk-cutting and printing plant of his own. He contends, and with some reason, that musical and engineering know-how are kept too far apart in big-company operations. He wants to blend them, on the theory that much heretofore unexploited music was virtually made to order for the new techniques. He is willing to bet, accordingly, on Henry Purcell, who had the foresight, in the late 1600s, to write some of the world's most entrancing music to intelligible English words and for small groups of singers and instrumentalists. Purcell's little operas, *King Arthur* and *The Fairy Queen*, and a collection of his songs, performed by John Brownlee, have been occupying Mr. Puner much of the summer.

Granted that these works have irresistible charm, one problem of Puner's and of his fellow pioneers still remains unsolved: How is the public to be nudged into trying them? Not even the hardiest record shopper, these days, can spend enough time in listening booths to sample the whole output of LP's. Nor can any newspaper or magazine critic keep up with it.

In some stores, knowledgeable record clerks fill the breach. But, as one New York music shop wails, an unprecedented spread of the discount disease is wrecking wage budgets and squeezing truly knowledgeable clerks out of jobs. A real help is the monthly record supplement issued, at $1 a year, by the Gramophone Shop, Inc., 18 East 48th Street, New York, which contains very sound, unbiased, thumbnail reviews of nearly all classical records published, both domestic and foreign, microgroove and 78 r.p.m.

Another solution, with which sundry record shops have been flirting since the LP flood began, might be rental record libraries. LP's don't break and they can be cleaned safely with a damp cloth. Such items as Decca's complete transcriptions of Broadway plays like *The Cocktail Party* and *Death of a Salesman* would, beyond any doubt, pay back their purchase price to any library in jig time. And many a music lover who might boggle at buying, unheard and for $5.95, an unfamiliar work like Heinrich Schütz's Christmas oratorio might jump at the chance to take it home with him for the week-end for 50 cents. By Monday morning, he might want to keep it.

Despite the onrush of LP, there still are neglected areas in commercial catalogues — and musical gadgeters to view them as a challenge.

It may be a surprise to some record collectors to hear, for example, that there exist excellent recordings of two "missing" works. One is Beethoven's great B-flat major quartet, opus 130, played in its original version, with the Great Fugue as final movement. The other is Schubert's captivating Symphony No. 6 (the obvious source, incidentally, for much of Prokofiev's Classical Symphony, despite anecdotes invoking Mozart).

The catch is, these records are not available to the public. They are the prized private property of a couple of ingenious East Coast music fiends, to be nameless here except as Fiend A and Fiend B, who had a friend with a good FM receiver and tape recorder and a felicitous location within easy FM range of the Library

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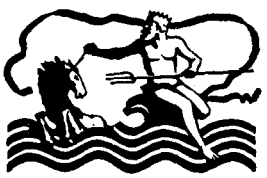

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In the winter of 1948–1949 the Library, jointly with a local "good music" station, broadcast a Beethoven cycle played flawlessly by the Budapest Quartet. The night the B-flat major was performed, Fiend A and his friend hooked the twin leads of the FM tuner to the tape recorder, a $500 high-fidelity job. Then they monitored the broadcast via the loudspeaker.

Next day, Fiend A took the tape to a commercial recording studio. His cheapest course, he found, was to have the quartet transcribed on slow-playing (33⅓ r.p.m.) but standard groove records. It cost him $10.

Fiend B, a year later, went through the same procedure to record the Schubert symphony, zestfully played by Richard Bales and the National Gallery Orchestra, sponsored by the Gallery and the American Federation of Musicians, and expertly microphoned by a coöp FM station. Owing to the lapse of a year, Fiend B had much less explaining to do at the studio.

The staff there even took the initiative, asking him if he represented a "club." If he did, the club could have an LP master-disk cut (the LP process is not recommended for instantaneous recording; microgrooves in acetate don't stand up well) for about $40, and vinylites printed from it at $2 a disk. If the club had twelve members, each would pay about $5.30 for his 12-inch LP.

Fiend B had no club — but if he had, there is no reason its LP's couldn't have been as good as anyone's. Such engineering developments as Columbia's "hot stylus" master-recording technique, which yields wonderfully quiet, accurately cut grooves, are now in wide use. This has largely solved the treble-droop hazard which used to plague LP makers (the nearer the cutting stylus got to the center of the record, the fewer high tones it recorded). Nevertheless, it still is a good idea, when having an LP master cut, to have the studio guarantee the result.

Also, it is astute to keep any club

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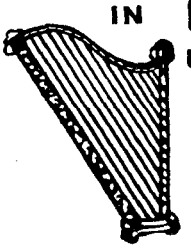

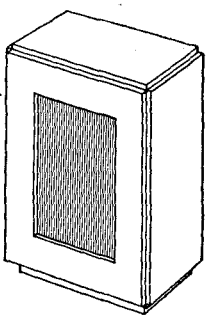

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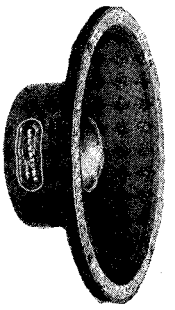

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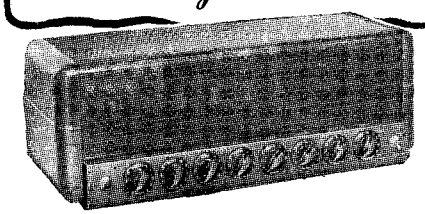

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activities clear of the taint of profit. The American Federation of Musicians, which derives royalties from commercial recordings, and the Music Publishers' Protective Association, which oversees mechanical reproduction, regard unlicensed record-making for profit much as the FBI views amateur experiments in nuclear fission.

Often excellent recordings are issued only to be lost in the publicity shuffle; others' acclaim dies down too soon. Mentioned here are a few which might fall in one of these two categories: —

Bach: Concerto No. 1 in D Minor (Frank Pelleg, harpsichord, and Israel Philharmonic; 12″ LP; Period SPL 509). Performed, at last, on the proper instrument, adequately recorded.

Bach: St. Matthew Passion (soloists and choruses of the Berlin Radio and St. Hedwig's Cathedral, Fritz Lehmann conducting; four 12″ LP's; Polydor-Vox PL 6070). Best reasonably priced version of this vast work. Highly satisfactory throughout.

Beethoven: Mass in C Major, Op. 86 (not *the* Missa Solemnis; Vienna Symphony Orchestra and Akademie Kammerchor, Rudolf Moralt conducting; 12″ LP; Polydor-Vox PL 6300). First recording; excellent job throughout.

Beethoven: Egmont — Incidental Music, Op. 84 (Soloists and Württemberg State Orchestra, Ferdinand Leitner conducting; four 12″ 78's; Deutsche Grammophon DGS 32). Klärchen's wonderful song, *Die Trommel gerührt*, by itself excuses the high price. Recording: adequate.

Brahms: Sonatas No. 1 in F Minor, No. 2 in E-flat Major, Op. 120, for Clarinet and Piano (Reginald Kell and Mieczyslaw Horszowski; 12″ LP; Mercury MG 10016). Ideal blend of players and music. Recording: good.

Kathleen Ferrier Album (British folk songs — *Blow the Wind Southerly; Sally Garden; Keel Row*, etc.; piano by Phyllis Spurrier; three 10″ 78's; London LA 95). Irresistible performance by one of today's finest contraltos. Recording: superb.

Mozart: Serenade No. 9 in D, "Posthorn" (Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Jonathan Sternberg conducting; 12″ LP; Haydn Society HSLP 1012). Exemplary small-orchestra performance. Recording: excellent.

Offenbach: Tales of Hoffman (André Cluytens, Opéra Comique of Paris; three 12″ LP's or sixteen 12″ 78's; Columbia SL 106 or CMOP 31). Crisp, crystal-clear, very French production, perhaps best LP opera yet.

Puccini: Gianni Schicchi (Alfredo Simonetti, Italian cast, and Radio Italy Orchestra; with English libretto; 12″ LP; Cetra-Soria CS 50028). Forty-five minutes of fine Italian ham. Recording: good.

Rameau: Les Indes Galantes (excerpts, early opera ballet; soloists, Yvonne Gouverné chorus and chamber orchestra, Maurice Hewitt conducting; 12″ LP; Discophiles Français-Vox DL 6080). Charming is the only word. Recording: transcribed from older 78's, but not bad.

Respighi: Fountains of Rome (Orchestra of the Augusteo, Rome, Victor de Sabata conducting; 12″ LP; two 12″ 78's or two 45's; Victor LM 1057; WDM 1337; DM 1337. LP has Debussy's *Jeux*, same performers, on other side). A veritable revelation. Recording: excellent.

Sibelius: Symphony No. 5 in E-flat Major (London Philharmonic, Erich Leinsdorf conducting; four 12″ 78's; London LA 142). Makes predecessors sound feeble. Recording: brilliant.

Villa-Lobos: Choros No. 10 (Los Angeles Oratorio Society and orchestra, Werner Janssen conducting; 10″ LP or two 12″ 78's; Capitol CLP 8043 and EBL 8042; LP includes as filler the captivating toccata *Little Train*

of the Caipira, also available as 78 single). Infectious, quasi-primitive chant-effects, well handled. Recording: fair.

Weill: Lost in the Stars (original New York cast; 12″ LP; Decca DLP 8028). Like *Porgy and Bess* — also in that it has Todd Duncan — this probably is going to outgrow the "Broadway musical" designation and endure as music.

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TRUTH IN MAKE-BELIEVE

by N. BRYLLION FAGIN

N. BRYLLION FAGIN *is an associate professor of English at the Johns Hopkins University and director of its theater. He is the author of several books, the latest being* The Histrionic Mr. Poe.

SOME years ago I directed a play which had a supremely innocent, demure, and sentimental character named Maria. In a moment of revulsion against type-casting — moments which all college drama directors occasionally have — I offered the part to a flashy and obviously sophisticated girl. She surveyed me with eyes full of perplexity.

"Do I look like Maria?" she asked.

"No," I said; "frankly, you don't. But I am trying to give you a break. You want to be an actress and you need the experience of playing all kinds of characters. Take this part and see what you can do with it."

She took it, and was the hit of the play. Subsequently, in attempting to answer the questions of members of the audience, including friends of the girl, I came to the conclusion that the girl had really accomplished no great feat of acting. She had merely played herself, her true self, the self which she had been afraid or ashamed to be in her real little world. There she played the part of a "toughie," of a hard worldling out of a James M. Cain or John O'Hara novel; Maria had provided her with the opportunity of being what she essentially was: modest, sentimental, and, yes, sweet.

"Afraid or ashamed." These three words seem to explain a great many people who come to the stage for release from their make-believe selves. With a mere modicum of coaching, sedate housewives and shy stenographers become glamorous Cleopatras and bold Phèdres, and ungainly football players and timid bookkeepers become graceful Ariels and assertive Petruchios. The giveaway of their cherished aspiration lies in the authenticity of their characterizations. They ring true on the stage, not because they are good actors — for most of them are not actors at all, in the sense of being trained, disciplined craftsmen — but because they enjoy the rare luxury of being themselves.

A professorial friend of mine, a distinguished economist, recently confessed to me that for years now he has been suppressing a wish to grow a goatee, to wear pearl-gray spats and pince-nez on a black string, and to carry a cane. My guess is that he would give a creditable performance; even if his characterization should be technically faulty, its inner truth would be enough to hold an audience. For a little while at least he would be not the austere New Englander and conservatively garbed college professor which he appears to be before the world, but a colorful dandy, a sort of Flammonde with foreign air, which he really is.

The difficulty would be in persuading him that his friends and colleagues would not condemn him for engaging in play-acting. There is something about the stage — its very fascination perhaps, its light and warmth, its boldness of rhythm, its air of uninhibited reality — which inspires the "normal" citizen with a sense of uncertainty and resentment. Perhaps it is merely a retention of Cotton Mather's propaganda that the stage is "the synagogue of Satan."

At any rate, my economist friend will probably never dare to walk the boards goateed, pince-nezed, and pearl-gray-spatted. Nor will another friend, an exquisite chef condemned to a life of research in medieval history, ever play the part he once hinted he might like to play, that of the cook in *Cyrano*. He would have given a capital performance. But he, too, like most of us, is obliged to maintain his dignity, to act the part the world has thrust upon him.

Producing plays in a college theater is an arduous undertaking. But it has its compensations. Not the least of these is the fun of seeing sober people drop the roles the circumstances of life have constrained them to assume, and become, for a few evenings at least, the persons their inner nature has meant them to be.

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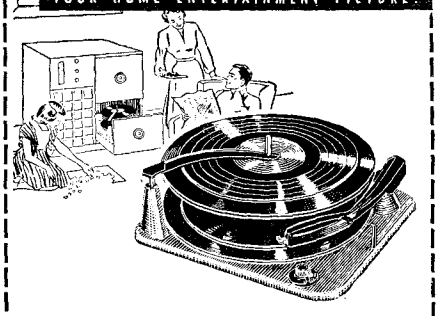

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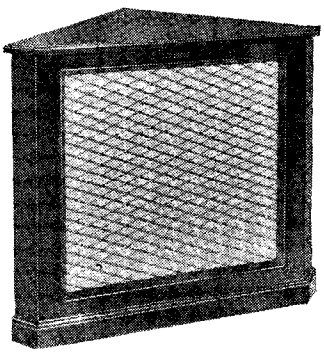

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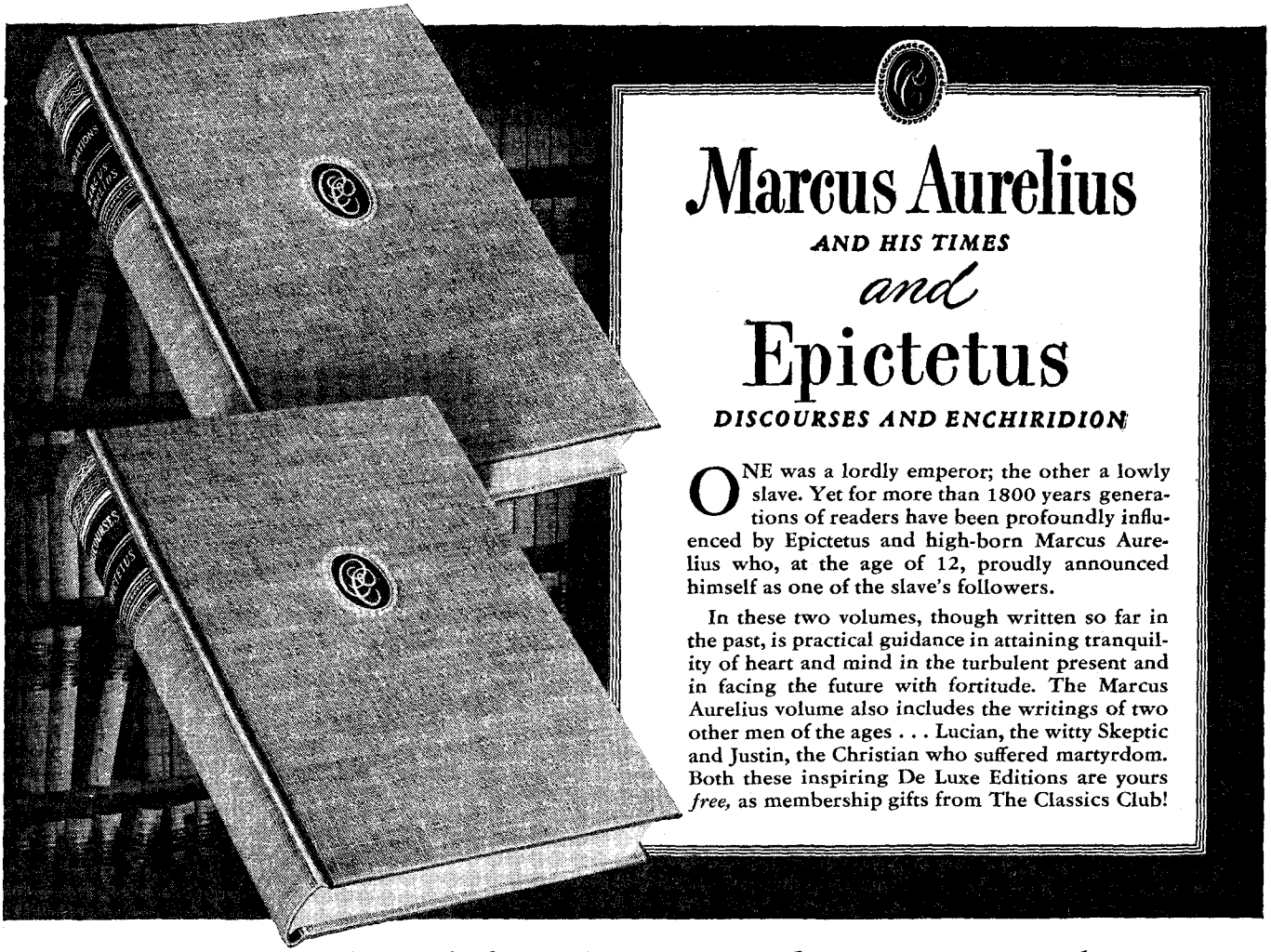

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